SPECIAL ALL-STAR ISSUE

ISAAC ASIMOV
Anyone For Tens

THE MAGAZINE OF

Fantasy AND Science Fiction

MARCH $1.25 • UK 75p.

John Varley R. Bretnor Ted Thomas
Manly Wade Wellman Randall Garrett
Charles L. Grant Robert F. Young

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

READ IT SLOWLY.

You'll want to. It's that good . . . it's The Hugo Winners: 23 speculative fiction stories that have won the science fiction equivalent of the Oscar —Arthur C. Clarke's superb story, "The Star," Jack Vance's classic, "The Dragon Masters," and Poul Anderson's award-winner, "No Truce With Kings," plus 20 more.

This fabulous 864-page anthology of speculative fiction sells for $15.45 in the original publisher's edition. It's yours, if you wish, as one of 4 books for just 10¢ (plus shipping and handling) when you join The Science Fiction Book Club.

Here's how the Club works:

When your application for membership is accepted, you'll receive your introductory package of four books for just 10¢. You may examine them in your home, and if not completely satisfied, return them within ten days—membership will be cancelled and you'll owe nothing.

About every 4 weeks (14 times a year), we'll send you the Club's bulletin, *Things to Come*, describing the 2 coming Selections and a variety of Alternate choices. If you want both Selections, you need do nothing; they'll be shipped automatically. If you don't want a Selection, or prefer an Alternate, or no book at all, just fill out the convenient form always provided, and return it to us by the date specified. We try to allow you at least ten days for making your decision. If you do not receive the form in time to respond within 10 days, and receive an unwanted selection, you may return it at our expense.

As a member you need take only 4 Selections or Alternates during the coming year. You may resign any time thereafter, or remain a member as long as you wish. At least one of the two Selections each month is only $1.98 plus shipping and handling. Other extra-value selections are slightly higher but always much less than Publishers' Editions. Send no money. But do send the coupon today.

ANY 4 SCIENCE FICTION BEST SELLERS FOR JUST 10¢ with membership

Science Fiction Book Club 45-S131
Dept. PR255, Garden City, N.Y. 11530

I have read your ad. Please accept me as a member in the Science Fiction Book Club.

Send me, as a beginning, the 4 books whose numbers I have indicated below, and bill me just 10¢ (plus shipping and handling). I agree to take 4 additional books during the coming year and may resign anytime thereafter. SFC books are selections for mature readers.

Mr.
Mrs.
Miss _____
Please print

Address _____ Apt. ____

City _____ State _____ Zip _____

If under 18 parent must sign. Order not valid without signature.

_____

6221. **The Foundation Trilogy.** By Isaac Asimov. The ends of the galaxy revert to barbarism. An SF classic. Comb. Price $19.85

7633. **A Heritage of Stars.** By Clifford D. Simak. 500 years after Earth has reverted to a primitive society, one man is driven to reach for the stars. Pub. ed. $7.95

6403. **The Star Trek Reader III.** Adapted by James Blish. 19 more outstanding and exciting adventures of the Starship Enterprise and its gallant crew. Pub. ed. $8.95

5041. **Star Wars:** From the Adventures of Luke Skywalker. By George Lucas. Life on a backwater planet can be dull, unless you become involved in an interstellar rebellion. Photos from the motion picture. Special Edition.

4739. **Gateway.** By Frederik Pohl. Travel on alien ships to distant parts of the universe—with no guarantee of return. By the author of **Man Plus.** Pub. ed. $8.95

2295. **The Sword of Shannara.** By Terry Brooks. A massive quest novel in the very best Tolkien tradition. Illustrated by the Brothers Hildebrandt. Pub. ed. $12.95

6080. **All My Sins Remembered.** By Joe Haldeman. A young man in search of excitement is sent to the danger spots of the galaxy. By the author of **Mindbridge.** Pub. ed. $7.95

0109. **Silence is Deadly.** By Lloyd Biggle, Jr. Spying on a new secret weapon proves difficult for Jan Darzek as he travels to a totally dead world. Pub. ed. $8.95

8532. **The Hugo Winners, Vol. I & II.** Giant 2-in-1 volume of 23 award-winning stories, 1955 to 1970. Asimov introduces each. Pub. ed. $15.45

6106. **The Adventures of the Stainless Steel Rat.** By Harry Harrison. 3 thrilling books in 1 exciting volume take us throughout the galaxy. Comb. ed. $15.85

6320. **A World Out of Time.** By Larry Niven. A black hole in space sends Jerome Corbell 3 million years into Earth's future where the ultimate battle of the sexes is raging. By co-author of **The Mote In God's Eye.** Pub. ed. $7.95

7625. **The 1977 Annual World's Best SF.** Donald A. Wollheim, ed. The best SF published during 1976 by Asimov, Knight, Varley and others. Includes Tiptree's **Houston, Houston, Do You Read?** Special Edition.

The Science Fiction Book Club offers its own complete hardbound editions sometimes altered in size to fit special presses and save members even more. Members accepted in U.S.A. and Canada only. Canadian members will be serviced from Toronto. Offer slightly different in Canada.

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

Fantasy and Science Fiction

Including Venture Science Fiction

MARCH • 29th YEAR OF PUBLICATION

NOVELLA

THE PERSISTENCE OF VISION	**JOHN VARLEY**	**6**

NOVELET

PAPA SCHIMMELHORN'S *YANG*	**R. BRETNOR**	**135**

SHORT STORIES

HUNDRED YEARS GONE	**MANLY WADE WELLMAN**	**51**
THE FAMILY MAN	**TED THOMAS**	**72**
THE SEVENTH FOOL	**GLEN COOK**	**78**
HEAR ME NOW, MY SWEET ABBEY ROSE	**CHARLES L. GRANT**	**84**
DOWN THE LADDER	**ROBERT F. YOUNG**	**100**
THE HORROR OUT OF TIME	**RANDALL GARRETT**	**111**

DEPARTMENTS

BOOKS	**ALGIS BUDRYS**	**63**
CARTOON	**GAHAN WILSON**	**83**
FILMS AND TELEVISION: *The Road To Albany*	**BAIRD SEARLES**	**97**
SCIENCE: *Anyone for Tens*	**ISAAC ASIMOV**	**123**

Cover by Chesley Bonestell

Edward L. Ferman, EDITOR & PUBLISHER — Isaac Asimov, SCIENCE COLUMNIST
Dale Farrell, CIRCULATION MANAGER — Audrey Ferman, BUSINESS MANAGER
Anne W. Burke, ASSISTANT EDITOR

The Magazine of Fantasy and Science Fiction, Volume 54; No. 3, Whole No. 322, March, 1978. Published monthly by Mercury Press, Inc. at $1.25 per copy. Annual subscription $12.50; $14.50 outside of the U.S. Postmaster: send form 3579 to Fantasy and Science Fiction, Box 56, Cornwall, Conn. 06753. Publication office, Box 56, Cornwall, Conn. 06753. Second class postage paid at Cornwall, Conn. 06753 and at additional mailing offices. Printed in U.S.A.

Copyright © 1978 by Mercury Press, Inc. All rights, including translations into other languages, reserved. Submissions must be accompanied by stamped, self-addressed envelope. The publisher assumes no responsibility for return of unsolicited manuscripts.

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

BASIC

DUNGEONS & DRAGONS*

*T.M. REG. APP. FOR

THE ORIGINAL ADVENTURE GAME OF ROLE PLAYING IN WORLDS OF THE STRANGE AND FANTASTIC

IN A NEW, COMPLETE FORMAT

In DUNGEONS & DRAGONS you are a Wizard, Hero, Elf or Dwarf. Go on fantastic adventures through tunnels deep beneath the earth or into uncharted wilderness in search of treasure and magic which are guarded by Trolls, Dragons or other Fearsome Monsters. A truly unique game which allows you to unleash your imagination and make your fantasy world come alive.

Everything needed to learn to play DUNGEONS & DRAGONS is available in one beautiful, full color box, at a low price you won't believe!

- *Complete basic rule book with handy reference sheets
- *Dungeon level geomorphs for planning your underworld
- *Five polyhedra dice for generating random numbers
- *600 monsters and treasures for populating your underworld

DUNGEONS & DRAGONS Only $9.95

TSR HOBBIES, INC.
P.O.B. 756 DEPT. F-13
Lake Geneva, Wi 53147

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

John Varley's last F&SF story was the memorable "In the Hall of the Martian Kings," February 1977. In this new novella, Mr. Varley departs somewhat from the traditional sf format to offer something quite stunning and different. Varley's new novel is The Ophiuchi Hotline (*The Dial Press*), *reviewed in the January issue.*

The Persistence of Vision

by JOHN VARLEY

It was the year of the fourth nondepression. I had recently joined the ranks of the unemployed. The President had told me that I had nothing to fear but fear itself. I took him at his word, for once, and set out to backpack to California.

I was not the only one. The world's economy had been writhing like a snake on a hot griddle for the last twenty years, since the early seventies. We were in a boom and bust cycle that seemed to have no end. It had wiped out the sense of security the nation had so painfully won in the golden years after the thirties. People were accustomed to the fact that they could be rich one year and on the breadlines the next. I was on the breadlines in '81, and again in '88. This time, I decided to use my freedom from the timeclock to see the world. I had ideas of stowing away to Japan. I was forty-seven years old and might not get another chance to be irresponsible.

This was in late summer of the year. Sticking out my thumb along the interstate, I could easily forget that there were food riots back in Chicago. I slept at night on top of my bedroll and saw stars and listened to crickets.

I must have walked most of the way from Chicago to Des Moines. My feet toughened up after a few days of awful blisters. The rides were scarce — partly competition from other hitchhikers and partly the times we were living in. The locals were none too anxious to give rides to city people, who they had heard were mostly a bunch of hunger-crazed potential mass-murderers. I got roughed up once and told never to return to Sheffield, Illinois.

But I gradually learned the knack of living on the road. I had started with a small supply of

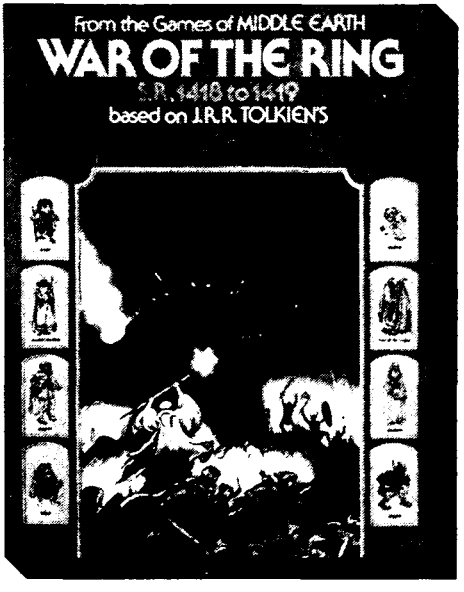
LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

A MAJOR FANTASY PUBLISHING EVENT:

WAR OF THE RING

based on J.R.R. TOLKIEN'S

THE LORD OF THE RINGS



Middle Earth comes alive in this fascinating new game version of J.R.R. Tolkien's *Lord of the Rings*. Every major character is yours to control as the Fellowship forms to oppose the forces of the Dark Lord. All the significant events of the Trilogy–from the Council of Elrond to the climactic encounter at the Crack of Doom–are re-created for you to experience. Middle Earth is yours to explore on the beautiful 31" × 34" four-color game map as you assume the roles of your favorite Tolkien characters and lead your armies into battle for control of the Ring. ***War of the Ring*** is not a frivolous parlor game; rather it is the authorized, authentic portrayal of the richly detailed mythical world of J.R.R. Tolkien's *Lord of the Rings*.

War of the Ring has been specially designed by **SPI**, the leading publisher of history, fantasy, and science-fiction simulation games. ***War of the Ring*** is available now at better book and game stores, nationwide. Ask your dealer for it–or order directly by mail from **SPI**.

Your ***War of the Ring*** game contains:

★ *Big two-piece, four-color game map of Middle Earth printed on heavy cardstock* ★ 112 laminated playing cards depicting characters and events ★ 400 multi-color playing pieces ★ Illustrated and annotated rules booklet ★ Handsome three-color cover with illustrations by artist Tim Kirk ★ Compartmented, plastic storage box.

SPI publishes a complete line of simulation games. Send for our free brochure. SPI is also the publisher of ***Strategy & Tactics Magazine***, the bi-monthly military history magazine that comes complete with its own simulation game. See the coupon for subscription rates►

War of the Ring is produced by SPI. Licensed by Tolkien Enterprises, a division of Elan Merchandising, Inc., Berkeley, California 94710. Unauthorized use of Tolkien names, characters, or places is strictly prohibited. © Copyright 1977 by Tolkien Enterprises, a division of Elan Merchandising, Inc.

SPI has been serving customers by mail since 1970

Send check or money order to:

SPI, Dept. 671
44 East 23rd Street
New York, N.Y. 10010

Please send me the following games:

☐ **War of the Ring**-$15.00

☐ **Middle Earth** (a three-game set including ***War of the Ring*** plus two smaller Middle Earth battle games, ***Gondor*** and ***Sauron***)-$20.00

Please enter my subscription to Strategy & Tactics Magazine:

☐ 1 year (6 issues):$14 ☐ 2 years (12 issues):$26

☐ 3 years (18 issues):$36 ☐ please send free brochure

*Name (print)*_____

*Street*_____ *Apt#*_____

*City*_____ *State*_____ *Zip*_____

Prices apply to all orders deliverable to USA or APO/FPO addresses. Allow three weeks for delivery. Payment must accompany order. New York residents add sales tax. Foreign customers add $2 surcharge to any order–US funds only. Products are returnable for cash or credit (specify) if returned intact with 15 days of receipt.

THIS LINE FOR OFFICE USE ONLY: CUS CODE TOTAL CREDIT POSTAGE TAX

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

canned goods from the welfare, and by the time they ran out, I had found that it was possible to work for a meal at many of the farmhouses along the way.

Some of it was hard work; some of it was only a token from people with a deeply ingrained sense that nothing should come for free. A few meals were gratis, at the family table with grandchildren sitting around while grandpa or grandma told oft-repeated tales of what it had been like in the Big One back in '29, when people had not been afraid to help a fellow out when he was down on his luck. I found that the older the person, the more likely I was to get a sympathetic ear. One of the many tricks you learn. And most older people will give you anything if you'll only sit and listen to them. I got very good at it.

The rides began to pick up west of Des Moines, then got bad again as I neared the refugee camps bordering the China Strip. This was only five years after the disaster, remember, when the Omaha nuclear reactor melted down and a hot mass of uranium and plutonium began eating its way into the earth, headed for China, spreading a band of radioactivity six hundred kilometers downwind. Most of Kansas City, Missouri, was still living in plywood and sheet-metal shantytowns while the city was rendered habitable again.

These people were a tragic group. The initial solidarity people show after a great disaster had long since faded into the lethargy and disillusionment of the displaced person. Many of them would be in and out of hospitals for the rest of their lives. To make it worse, the local people hated them, feared them, would not associate with them. They were modern pariahs: unclean. Their children were shunned. Each camp had only a number to identify it, but the local populace called them all Geigertowns.

I made a long detour to Little Rock to avoid crossing the Strip, though it was safe now as long as you didn't linger. I was issued a pariah's badge by the National Guard — a dosimeter — and wandered from one Geigertown to the next. The people were pitifully friendly once I made the first move, and I always slept indoors. The food was free at the community messes.

Once at Little Rock, the aversion to picking up strangers — who might be tainted with "radiation disease" — dropped off, and I quickly moved across Arkansas, Oklahoma, and Texas. I worked a little here and there, but many of the rides were long. What I saw of Texas was through a car window.

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

I was a little tired of that by the time I reached New Mexico. I decided to do some more walking. By then I was less interested in California than in the trip itself.

I left the roads and went cross-country where there were no fences to stop me. I found that it wasn't easy, even in New Mexico, to get far from signs of civilization.

Taos was the center, back in the 60's, of cultural experiments in alternative living. Many communes and cooperatives were set up in the surrounding hills during that time. Most of them fell apart in a few months or years, but a few survived. In later years, any group with a new theory of living and a yen to try it out seemed to gravitate to that part of New Mexico. As a result, the land was dotted with ramshackle windmills, solar heating panels, geodesic domes, group marriages, nudists, philosophers, theoreticians, messiahs, hermits, and more than a few just plain nuts.

Taos was great. I could drop into most of these communes and stay for a day or a week, eating organic rice and beans and drinking goat's milk. When I got tired of one, a few hours walk in any direction would bring me to another. There, I might be offered a night of prayer and chanting or a ritualistic orgy. Some of the groups had spotless barns with automatic milkers for the herds of cows. Others didn't even have latrines; they just squatted. In some, the members dressed like nuns or Quakers in early Pennsylvania. Elsewhere, they went nude and shaved all their body hair and painted themselves purple. There were all-male and all-female groups. I was urged to stay at most of the former; at the latter, the responses ranged from a bed for the night and good conversation to being met at a barbed-wire fence with a shotgun.

I tried not to make judgments. These people were doing something important, all of them. They were testing ways whereby people didn't have to live in Chicago. That was a wonder to me. I had thought Chicago was inevitable, like diarrhea.

This is not to say they were all successful. Some made Chicago look like Shangri-la. There was one group who seemed to feel that getting back to nature consisted of sleeping in pigshit and eating food a buzzard wouldn't touch. Many were obviously doomed. They would leave behind a group of empty hovels and the memory of cholera.

So the place wasn't paradise, not by a long ways. But there were successes. One or two had been there since '63 or '64 and were raising their third generation. I was disappointed to see that most of

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

these were the ones that departed least from established norms of behavior, though some of the differences could be startling. I suppose the most radical experiments are the least likely to bear fruit.

I stayed through the winter. No one was surprised to see me a second time. It seems that many people came to Taos and shopped around. I seldom stayed more than three weeks at any one place, and always pulled my weight. I made many friends and picked up skills that would serve me if I stayed off the roads. I toyed with the idea of staying at one of them forever. When I couldn't make up my mind, I was advised that there was no hurry. I could go to California and return. They seemed sure I would.

So when spring came, I headed west over the hills. I stayed off the roads and slept in the open. Many nights I would stay at another commune, until they finally began to get farther apart, then tapered off entirely. The country was not as pretty as what I had been through.

Then, three day's leisurely walking from the last commune, I came to a wall.

In 1964, in the United States, there was an epidemic of German Measles, or rubella. Rubella is one of the mildest of infectious diseases. The only time when it's a problem is when a woman contracts it in the first four months of her pregnancy. It is passed to the fetus, which usually develops complications. These complications include deafness, blindness, and damage to the brain.

In 1964, in the old days before abortion became readily available, there was nothing to be done about it. Many pregnant women caught rubella and went to term. Five thousand deaf-blind children were born in one year. The normal yearly incidence of deaf-blind children in the United States is one hundred and forty.

In 1970 these five thousand potential Hellen Kellers were all six years old. It was quickly seen that there was a shortage of Anne Sullivans. Previously, deaf-blind children could be sent to a small number of special institutions.

It was a problem. Not just anyone can cope with a blind-deaf child. You can't tell them to shut up when they moan; you can't reason with them, tell them that the moaning is driving you crazy. Some parents were driven to nervous breakdowns when they tried to keep their children at home.

Many of the five thousand were badly retarded and virtually impossible to reach, even if anyone had been trying. These ended up, for the most part, warehoused in the hundreds of anonymous nurs-

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

ing homes and institutes for "special" children. They were put into beds, cleaned up once a day by a few overworked nurses, and generally allowed the full blessings of liberty: they were allowed to rot freely in their own dark, quiet, private universes. Who can say if it was bad for them? None of them were heard to complain.

Many children with undamaged brains were shuffled in among the retarded through an inability to tell anyone that they were in there behind the sightless eyes. They failed the batteries of tactile tests, unaware that their fates hung in the balance when they were asked to fit round pegs into round holes to the ticking of a clock that they could not see or hear. They spent the rest of their lives in bed as a result, and none of them complained, either. To protest, one must be aware of the possibility of something better. It helps to have a language, too.

Several hundred of the children were found to have, IQ-wise, what might be thought of as normal intelligence. There were news stories about them as they approached puberty and it was revealed that there were not enough good people to properly handle them. Money was spent, teachers were trained. The education expenditures would go on for a specified period of time, until the children were grown, then things would be back to normal and everyone could congratulate themselves on having dealt successfully with a tough problem.

And, indeed, it did work fairly well. There are ways to reach and teach such children. They invovle patience, love, and dedication, and the teachers brought all that to their jobs. All the graduates of the special schools left knowing how to speak with their hands. Some could talk. A few could write. Most of them left the institutions to live with parents or relatives or, if neither was possible, received counseling and help in fitting themselves into society. The options were limited, but people can live rewarding lives under the most severe handicaps. Not everyone, but most of the graduates were as happy with their lot as could reasonably be expected. Some achieved the almost saintly peace of their role-model, Helen Keller. Others became bitter and withdrawn. A few had to be put in asylums, where they became indistinguishable from the others of their group who had spent the last twenty years there. But for the most part, they did well.

But among the group, as in any group, were some misfits. They tended to be among the brightest, the top ten percent of the IQ scores. This was not a reliable rule. Some had unremarkable test scores and

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

were still infected with the hunger to do something, to change things, to rock the boat. With a group of five thousand, there were certain to be a few geniuses, a few artists, a few dreamers, hell-raisers, individualists, movers and shapers: a few glorious maniacs.

There was one among them who might have been President but for the fact that she was blind, deaf, and a woman. She was smart, but not one of the geniuses. She was a dreamer, a creative force, an innovator. It was she who dreamed of freedom. But she was not a builder of fairy castles. Having dreamed it, she had to make it come true.

The wall was made of carefully fitted stone and was about five feet high. It was completely out of context with anything I had seen in New Mexico, though it was built of native rock. You just don't build that kind of wall out there. You use barbed wire if something needs fencing in, but many people still made use of the free range and brands. Somehow it seemed transplanted from New England.

It was substantial enough that I felt it would be unwise to crawl over it. I had crossed many wire fences in my travels and not got in trouble for it yet, though I had some talks with some ranchers. Mostly they told me to keep moving but didn't seem upset about it. This was different. I set out to walk around it. From the lay of the land, I couldn't tell how far it might reach, but I had time.

At the top of the next rise I saw that I didn't have far to go. The wall made a right-angle turn just ahead. I looked over it and could see some buildings. They were mostly domes, the ubiquitous structure thrown up by communes because of the combination of ease of construction and durability. There were sheep in there, and a few cows. They grazed on grass so green I wanted to go over and roll in it. The wall enclosed a rectangle of green. Outside, where I stood, it was all scrub and sage. These people had access to Rio Grande irrigation water.

I rounded the corner and followed the wall west again.

I saw a man on horseback about the same time he spotted me. He was south of me, outside the wall, and he turned and rode in my direction.

He was a dark man with thick features, dressed in denim and boots with a gray battered Stetson. Navaho, maybe. I don't know much about Indians, but I'd heard they were out here.

"Hello," I said when he'd stopped. He was looking me over. "Am I on your land?"

"Tribal land," he said. "Yeah,

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

you're on it."

"I didn't see any signs ... ."

He shrugged.

"It's okay, bud. You don't look like you're out to rustle cattle." He grinned at me. His teeth were large and stained with tobacco. "You be camping out tonight?"

"Yes. How much farther does the ... uh, tribal land go? Maybe I'll be out of it before tonight?"

He shook his head gravely. "Nah. You won't be off it tomorrow. 'S all right. You make a fire, you be careful, huh?" He grinned again and started to ride off.

"Hey, what is this place?" I gestured to the wall, and he pulled his horse up and turned around again. It raised a lot of dust.

"Why you asking?" He looked a little suspicious.

"I dunno. Just curious. It doesn't look like the other places I've been to. This wall ... ."

He scowled. "Damn wall." Then he shrugged. I thought that was all he was going to say. Then he went on.

"These people, we look out for 'em, you hear? Maybe we don't go for what they're doin'. But they got it rough, you know?" He looked at me, expecting something. I never did get the knack of talking to these laconic westerners. I always felt that I was making my sentences too long. They used a shorthand of grunts and shrugs and omitted parts of speech, and I always felt like a dude when I talked to them.

"Do they welcome guests?" I asked. "I thought I might see if I could spend the night."

He shrugged again, and it was a whole different gesture.

"Maybe. They all deaf and blind, you know?" And that was all the conversation he could take for the day. He made a clucking sound and galloped away.

I continued down the wall until I came to a dirt road that wound up the arroyo and entered the wall. There was a wooden gate, but it stood open. I wondered why they took all the trouble with the wall only to leave the gate like that. Then I noticed a circle of narrow-gauge train tracks that came out of the gate, looped around outside it, and rejoined itself. There was a small siding that ran along the outer wall for a few yards.

I stood there a few moments. I don't know what all entered into my decision. I think I was a little tired of sleeping out, and I was hungry for a home-cooked meal. The sun was getting closer to the horizon. The land to the west looked like more of the same. If the highway had been visible, I might have headed that way and hitched a ride. But I turned the other way and went through the gate.

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

I walked down the middle of the tracks. There was a wooden fence on each side of the road, built of horizontal planks, like a corral. Sheep grazed on one side of me. There was a Shetland sheepdog with them, and she raised her ears and followed me with her eyes as I passed.

It was about half a mile to the cluster of buildings ahead. There were four or five domes made of something translucent, like greenhouses, and several conventional square buildings. There were two windmills turning lazily in the breeze. There were several banks of solar water heaters. These are flat constructions of glass and wood, held off the ground so they can tilt to follow the sun. They were almost vertical now, intercepting the oblique rays of sunset. There were a few trees, what might have been an orchard.

About halfway there, I passed under a wooden footbridge. It arched over the road, giving access from the east pasture to the west pasture. I wondered what was wrong with a simple gate?

Then I saw something coming down the road in my direction. It was traveling on the tracks and it was very quiet. I stopped and waited.

It was a sort of converted mining engine, the sort that pulls loads of coal up from the bottom of shafts. It was battery-powered, and it had gotten quite close before I heard it. A small man was driving it. He was pulling a car behind him and singing as loud as he could with absolutely no sense of pitch.

He got closer and closer, moving about five miles per hour, one hand held out as if he was signalling a left turn. Suddenly I realized what was happening, as he was bearing down on me. He wasn't going to stop. He was counting fenceposts with his hand. I scrambled up the fence just in time. There wasn't more than six inches of clearance between the train and the fence on either side. His palm touched my leg as I squeezed close to the fence, and he stopped abruptly.

He leaped from the car and grabbed me and I thought I was in trouble. But he looked concerned, not angry, and felt me all over, trying to discover if I was hurt. I was embarrased. Not from the examination; because I had been foolish. The Indian had said they were all deaf and blind, but I guess I hadn't quite believed him.

He was flooded with relief when I managed to convey to him that I was all right. With eloquent gestures he made me understand that I was not to stay on the road. He indicated that I should climb over the fence and continue through the fields. He repeated

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

himself several times to be sure I understood, then held onto me as I climbed over to assure himself that I was out of the way. He reached over the fence and held my shoulders, smiling at me. He pointed to the road and shook his head, then pointed to the buildings and nodded. He touched my head and smiled when I nodded. He climbed back onto the engine and started up, all the time nodding and pointing where he wanted me to go. Then he was off again.

I debated what to do. Most of me said to turn around, go back to the wall by way of the pasture and head back into the hills. These people probably wouldn't want me around. I doubted that I'd be able to talk to them, and they might even resent me. On the other hand, I was fascinated, as who wouldn't be? I wanted to see how they managed it. I still didn't believe that they were *all* deaf and blind. It didn't seem possible.

The sheltie was sniffing at my pants. I looked down at her and she backed away, then daintily approached me as I held out my open hand. She sniffed, then licked me. I patted her on the head, and she hustled back to her sheep.

I turned toward the buildings.

The first order of business was money.

None of the students knew much about it from experience, but the library was full of Braille books. They started reading.

One of the first things that became apparent was that when money was mentioned, lawyers were not far away. They wrote letters. From the replies, they selected a lawyer and retained him.

They were in a school in Pennsylvania at the time. The original pupils of the special schools, five hundred in number, had been narrowed down to about seventy as people left to live with relatives or found other solutions to their special problems. Of those seventy, some had places to go but didn't want to go there, others had few alternatives. Their parents were either dead or not interested in living with them. So the seventy had been concentrated from the schools around the country into this one, while it was worked out what to do with them. The authorities had plans, but the students beat them to it.

Each of them had been entitled to a guaranteed annual income since 1977. They had been under the care of the government, and so they had not received it. They sent their lawyer to court. He came back with a ruling that they could not collect. They appealed and won. The money was paid retroactively, with interest, and came to a healthy sum. They thanked their lawyer

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

and retained a real-estate agent. Meanwhile they read.

They read about communes in New Mexico and instructed their agent to look for something out there. He made a deal for a tract to be leased in perpetuity from the Navaho Nation. They read about the land, found that it would need a lot of water to be productive in the way they wanted it to be.

They divided into groups to research what they would need to be self-sufficient.

Water could be obtained by tapping into the canals that carried it from the reservoirs on the Rio Grande into the reclaimed land in the south. Federal money was available for the project through a labyrinthine scheme involving HEW, the Agriculture Department, and the Bureau of Indian Affairs. They ended up paying little for their pipeline.

The land was arid. It would need fertilizer to be of use in raising sheep without resorting to open-range techniques. The cost of fertilizer could be subsidized through the Rural Resettlement Program. After that, planting clover would enrich the soil with all the nitrates they could want.

There were techniques available to farm ecologically, without worrying about fertilizers or pesticides. Everything was recycled. Essentially, you put sunlight and water into one end of the process and harvested wool, fish, vegetables, apples, honey, and eggs at the other end. You used nothing but the land and replaced even that as you recycled your waste products back into the soil. They were not interested in agribusiness with huge combine harvesters and crop dusters. They didn't even want to turn a profit. They merely wanted sufficiency.

The details multiplied astronomically. Their leader, the one who had the original idea and the drive to put it into action in the face of overwhelming obstacles, was a dynamo named Janet Reilly. Knowing nothing about the techniques generals and executives employ to achieve large objectives, she invented them for herself and adapted them to the peculiar needs and limitations of her group. She assigned task forces to look into solutions of each aspect of their project: law, science, social planning, design, buying, logistics, construction. At any one time, she was the only person who knew everything about what was happening. She kept it all in her head, without notes of any kind.

It was in the area of social planning that she showed herself to be a visionary and not just a superb organizer. Her idea was not to make a place where they could lead a life that was a sightless, sound-

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

less, imitation of their unafflicted peers. She wanted a whole new start, a way of living that was by and for the blind-deaf, a way of living that accepted no convention just because that was the way it had always been done. She examined every human cultural institution from marriage to indecent exposure to see how it related to her needs and the needs of her friends. She was aware of the peril of this approach, but was undeterred. Her Social Task Force read about every variant group that had ever tried to make it on its own anywhere, and they brought her reports about how and why these groups had failed or succeeded. She filtered this information through her own experiences to see how it would work for her unusual group with its own set of needs and goals.

The details were endless. They hired an architect to put their ideas into Braille blueprints. Gradually the plans evolved. They spent more money. The construction began, supervised on the site by their architect, who by now was so fascinated by the scheme that she donated her services. It was an important break, for they needed someone there that they could trust. There is only so much that can be accomplished at such a distance.

When things were ready for them to move, they ran into bureaucratic trouble. They had anticipated it, but it was a setback. Social agencies charged with overseeing their welfare doubted the wisdom of the project. When it became apparent that no amount of reasoning was going to stop it, wheels were set in motion that resulted in a restraining order, issued for their own protection, preventing them from leaving the school. They were twenty-one by then, all of them, but were judged mentally incompetent to manage their own affairs. A hearing was scheduled.

Luckily, they still had access to their lawyer. He also had become infected with the crazy vision and put on a terrific battle for them. He succeeded in getting a ruling concerning the rights of institutionalized persons, later upheld by the Supreme Court, that eventually had severe repercussions in state and county hospitals. Realizing the trouble they were already in regarding the thousands of patients in inadequate facilities across the country as a result of the first ruling, the agencies gave in.

By then, it was the spring of 1986, one year after their target date. Some of their fertilizer had washed away already for lack of erosion-preventing clover. It was getting late to start crops, and they were running short of money. Nevertheless, they moved to New Mexico and began the backbreak-

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

ing job of getting everything started. There were fifty-five of them, with nine children aged three months to six years.

I don't know what I expected. I remember that everything was a surprise, either because it was so normal or because it was so different. None of my idiot surmises about what such a place might be like proved to be true. And of course I didn't know the history of the place; I learned that later, picked it up in bits and pieces.

I was surprised to see lights in some of the buildings. The first thing I assumed was that they would have no need of them. That's an example of something so normal that it surprised me

As to the differences, the first thing that caught my attention was the fence around the rail line. I had a personal interest in it, having almost been injured by it. I struggled to understand, as I must if I was to stay here even for a night.

The wood fences that enclosed the rails on their way to the gate continued up to a barn, where the rails looped back on themselves in the same way they had outside the wall. The entire line was enclosed by the fence. The only access was a loading platform by the barn and the gate to the outside. It made sense. The only way a deaf-blind person could operate a conveyance like that would be with assurances that there was no one on the track. These people would *never* go on the tracks; there was no way they could be warned of an approaching train.

There were people moving around me in the twilight as I made my way into the group of buildings. They took no notice of me, as I had expected. They moved fast; some of them were actually running. I stood still, eyes searching all around me so no one would come crashing into me. I had to figure out how they kept from crashing into each other before I got bolder.

I bent to the ground and examined it. The light was getting bad, but I saw immediately that there were concrete sidewalks crisscrossing the area. Each of the walks was etched with a different sort of pattern in grooves that had been made before the stuff set — lines, waves, depressions, patches of rough and smooth. I quickly saw that the people who were in a hurry moved only on those walkways, and they were all barefoot. It was no trick to see that it was some sort of traffic pattern read with the feet. I stood up. I didn't need to know how it worked. It was sufficient to know what it was and stay off the paths.

The people were unremarkable. Some of them were not dressed, but I was used to that by now. They came in all shapes and sizes, but all seemed to be about the same age,

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

except for the children. Except for the fact that they did not stop and talk or even wave as they approached each other, I would never have guessed they were blind. I watched them come to intersections in the pathways — I didn't know how they knew they were there but could think of several ways — and slow down as they crossed. It was a marvelous system.

I began to think of approaching someone. I had been there for almost half an hour, an intruder. I guess I had a false sense of these people's vulnerability; I felt like a burglar.

I walked along beside a woman for a minute. She was very purposeful in her eyes-ahead stride, or seemed to be. She sensed something, maybe my footsteps. She slowed a little, and I touched her on the shoulder, not knowing what else to do. She stopped dead instantly and turned toward me. Her eyes were open, but vacant. Her hands were all over me, lightly touching my face, my chest, my hands, fingering my clothing. There was no doubt in my mind that she knew me for a stranger, probably from the first tap on the shoulder. But she smiled warmly at me, and hugged me. Her hands were very delicate and warm. That's funny, because they were calloused from hard work, but it was still true; they felt sensitive.

She made me to understand — by pointing to the building, making eating motions with an imaginary spoon, and touching a number on her watch — that supper was served in an hour and that I was invited. I nodded and smiled beneath her hands; she kissed me on the cheek and hurried off.

Well. It hadn't been so bad. I had worried about my ability to communicate. Later I found out she learned a great deal more about me than I had told.

I put off going into the mess hall or whatever it was. I strolled around in the gathering darkness looking at their layout. I saw the little sheltie bringing the sheep back to the fold for the night. She herded them expertly through the open gate without any instructions, and one of the residents closed it and locked them in. The man bent and scratched the dog on the head and got his hand licked. Her chores done for the night, the dog hurried over to me and sniffed my pant leg. She followed me around the rest of the evening.

Everyone seemed so busy that I was surprised to see one woman sitting on a rail fence, doing nothing. I went over to her.

Closer, I saw that she was younger than I had thought. She was thirteen, I learned later. She wasn't wearing any clothes. I touched her on the shoulder, and

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

she jumped down from the fence and went through the same routine as the other woman had, touching me all over with no reserve. She took my hand and I felt her fingers moving rapidly in my palm. I couldn't understand it, but knew what it was. I shrugged and tried out other gestures to indicate that I didn't speak hand-talk. She nodded, still feeling my face with her hands.

She asked me if I was staying to dinner. I assured her that I was. She asked me if I was from a university. And if you think that's easy to ask with only body movements, try it. But she was so graceful and supple in her movements, so deft at getting her meaning across. It was beautiful to watch her. It was speech and ballet at the same time.

I told her I wasn't from a university and launched into an attempt to tell her a little about what I was doing and how I got there. She listened to me with her hands, scratching her head graphically when I failed to make my meanings clear. All the time, the smile on her face got broader and broader, and she would laugh silently at my antics. All this while standing very close to me, touching me. At last she put her hands on her hips.

"I guess you need the practice," she said, "But if it's all the same to you, could we talk mouth-talk for now? You're cracking me up."

I jumped as if stung by a bee. The touching, while something I could ignore for a deaf-blind girl, suddenly seemed out of place. I stepped back a little, but her hands remained on me. She looked puzzled, then read the problem with her hands.

"I'm sorry," she said. "You thought I was deaf and blind. If I'd known I would have told you right off."

"I thought everyone here was."

"Just the parents. I'm one of the children. We all hear and see quite well. Don't be so nervous. If you can't stand touching, you're not going to like it here. Relax, I won't hurt you." And she kept her hands moving over me, mostly my face. I didn't understand it at the time, but it didn't seem sexual. Turned out I was wrong, but it wasn't blatent.

"You'll need me to show you the ropes," she said and started for the domes. She held my hand and walked close to me. Her other hand kept moving to my face every time I talked.

"Number One: stay off the concrete paths. That's where ... ."

"I already figured that out."

"You did? How long have you been here?" Her hands searched my face with renewed interest. It was quite dark.

"Less than an hour. I was

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

almost run over by your train,"

She laughed, then apologized and said she knew it wasn't funny to me.

I told her it *was* funny to me now, though it hadn't been at the time. She said there was a warning sign on the gate, but I had been unlucky enough to come when the gate was open — they did it by remote control before the train started up — and I hadn't seen it.

"What's your name?" I asked her, as we neared the soft yellow lights coming from the dining room.

Her hand worked reflexively in mine, then stopped. "Oh, I don't know. I *have* one; several, in fact. But they're in body-talk. I'm ... Pink. It translates as Pink, I guess."

There was a story behind it. She had been the first child born to the school students. They knew that babies were described as being pink, and so they called her that. She felt pink to them. As we entered the hall, I could see that it was visually inaccurate. One of her parents had been black. She was dark, with blue eyes and curly hair lighter than her skin. She had a broad nose, but small lips.

She didn't ask my name, and so I didn't offer it. No one asked my name, in speech, the entire time I was there. They called me many things in body-talk, and when the children called me, it was "Hey, you!" They weren't big on spoken words.

The dining hall was in a rectangular building made of brick. It connected to one of the large domes. It was dimly lighted. I later learned that the lights were for me alone. The children didn't need them for anything but reading. I held on to Pink's hand, glad to have a guide. I kept my eyes and ears open.

"We're informal," Pink said. Her voice was embarrassingly loud in the large room. No one else was talking at all; there were just the sounds of movement and breathing. Several of the children looked up. "I won't introduce you around now. Just feel like part of the family. People will feel you later, and you can talk to them. You can take you clothes off here at the door."

I had no trouble with that. Everyone else was nude, and I could easily adjust to household customs by that time. You take your shoes off in Japan, you take you clothes off in Taos. What's the difference?

Well, quite a bit, actually. There was all the touching that went on. Everybody touched everybody else, as routinely as glancing. Everyone touched my face first, then went on with what seemed like total innocence to

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

touch me everywhere else. As usual, it was not quite what it seemed. It was *not* innocent, and it was not the usual treatment they gave others in their group. They touched each other's genitals a lot *more* than they touched mine. They were holding back with me so I wouldn't be frightened. They were very polite with strangers.

There was a long, low table, with everyone sitting on the floor around it. Pink led me to it.

"See the bare strips on the floor? Stay out of them. Don't leave anything in them. That's where people walk. Don't *ever* move anything. Furniture, I mean. That has to be decided at full meetings, so we'll all know where everything is. Small things, too. If you pick up something, put it back exactly where you found it."

"I understand."

People were bringing bowls and platters of food from the kitchen, which adjoined. They set them on the table, and the diners began feeling them. They ate with their fingers, without plates, and they did it slowly and lovingly. They smelled things for a long time before they took a bite. Eating was very sensual to these people.

They were *terrific* cooks. I have never, before or since, eaten as well as I did at Keller. (That's my name for it, in speech, though their body-talk name was something very like that. When I called it Keller, everyone knew what I was talking about.) They started off with good, fresh produce, something that's hard enough to find in the cities, and went at the cooking with artistry and imagination. It wasn't like any national style I've eaten. They improvised and seldom cooked the same thing the same way twice.

I sat between Pink and the fellow who almost ran me down earlier. I stuffed myself disgracefully. It was too far removed from beef jerky and the organic dry cardboard I had been eating for me to be able to resist. I lingered over it, but still finished long before anyone else. I watched them as I sat back carefully and wondered if I'd be sick. (I wasn't, thank God.) They fed themselves and each other, sometimes getting up and going clear around the table to offer a choice morsel to a friend on the other side. I was fed in this way by all too many of them, and nearly popped until I learned a pidgin phrase in hand-talk, saying I was full to the brim. I learned from Pink that a friendlier way to refuse was to offer something myself.

Eventually I had nothing to do but feed Pink and look at the others. I began to be more observant. I had thought they were eating in solitude but soon saw that lively conversation was flowing

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

around the table. Hands were busy, moving almost too fast to see. They were spelling into each other's palms, shoulders, legs, arms, bellys, any part of the body. I watched in amazement as a ripple of laughter spread like falling dominoes from one end of the table to the other as some witticism was passed along the line. It was *fast.* Looking carefully, I could see the thoughts moving, reaching one person, passed on while a reply went in the other direction and was in turn passed on, other replies originating all along the line and bouncing back and forth. They were a wave-form, like water.

It was messy. Let's face it; eating with your fingers and talking with your hands is going to get you smeared with food. But no one minded. *I* certainly didn't. I was too busy feeling left out. Pink talked to me, but I knew I was finding out what it's like to be deaf. These people were friendly and seemed to like me but could do nothing about it. We couldn't communicate.

Afterwards, we all trooped outside, except the clean-up crew, and took a shower beneath a set of faucets that gave out very cold water. I told Pink I'd like to help with the dishes, but she said I'd just be in the way. I couldn't do anything around Keller until I learned their very specific ways of doing things. She seemed to be assuming already that I'd be around that long.

Back into the building to dry off, which they did with their usual puppy-dog friendliness, making a game and a gift of toweling each other, and then we went into the dome.

It was warm inside, warm and dark. Light entered from the passage to the dining room, but it wasn't enough to blot out the stars through the lattice of triangular panes overhead. It was almost like being out in the open.

Pink quickly pointed out the positional etiquette within the dome. It wasn't hard to follow, but I still tended to keep my arms and legs pulled in close so I wouldn't trip someone by sprawling into a walk space.

My misconceptions got me again. There was no sound but the soft whisper of flesh against flesh, and so I thought I was in the middle of an orgy. I had been at them before, in other communes, and they looked pretty much like this. I quickly saw that I was wrong and only later found out I had been right. In a sense.

What threw my evaluations out of whack was the simple fact that group conversation among these people *had* to look like an orgy. The much subtler observation that I made later was that with a hundred naked bodies sliding, rubbing,

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

kissing, caressing all at the same time, what was the point in making a distinction? There was no distinction.

I have to say that I use the noun "orgy" only to get across a general idea of many people in close contact. I don't like the word, it is too ripe with connotations. But I had these connotations myself at the time, and so I was relieved to see that it was not an orgy. The ones I had been to had been tedious and impersonal, and I had hoped for better from these people.

Many wormed their way through the crush to get to me and meet me. It was never more than one at a time; they were constantly aware of what was going on and were waiting their turn to talk to me. Naturally, I didn't know it then. Pink sat with me to interpret the hard thoughts. I eventually used her words less and less, getting into the spirit of tactile seeing and understanding. No one felt they really knew me until they had touched every part of my body, and there were hands on me all the time. I timidly did the same.

What with all the touching, I quickly got an erection which embarrassed me quite a bit. I was berating myself for being unable to keep sexual responses out of it, for not being able to operate on the same intellectual plane I thought they were on, when I realized with some shock that the couple next to me were making love. They had been doing it for the last ten minutes, actually, and it had seemed such a natural part of what was happening that I had known it and not known it at the same time.

No sooner had I realized it than I suddenly wondered if I was right. *Were they?* It was very slow and the light was bad. But her legs were up, and he was on top of her, that much I was sure of. It was foolish of me, but I really had to know. I had to find out *what the hell I was in.* How could I give the proper social responses if I didn't know the situation?

I was very sensitive to polite behavior after my months at various communes. I had become adept at saying prayers before supper in one place, chanting Hare Krishna at another, and going happily nudist at still another. It's called "when in Rome," and if you can't adapt to it you shouldn't go visiting. I would kneel to Mecca, burp after my meals, toast anything that was proposed, eat organic rice and compliment the cook; but to do it right, you have to know the customs. I had thought I knew them but had changed my mind three times in as many minutes.

They *were* making love, in the sense that he was penetrating her. They were also deeply involved with each other. Their hands fluttered

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

like butterflies all over each other, filled with meanings I couldn't see or feel. But they were being touched by and were touching many other people around them. They were talking to all these people, even if the message was as simple as a pat on the forehead or arm.

Pink noticed where my attention was. She was sort of wound around me, without really doing anything I would have thought of as provocative. I just couldn't *decide.* It seemed so innocent, and yet it wasn't.

"That's (—) and (—)," she said, the parentheses indicating a series of hand motions against my palm. I never learned a sound word as a name for any of them but Pink, and I can't reproduce the body-talk names they had. Pink reached over and touched the woman with her foot and did some complicated business with her toes. The woman smiled and grabbed Pink's foot, her fingers moving.

"(—) would like to talk with you later," Pink told me. "Right after she's through talking to (—). You met her earlier, remember? She says she likes your hands."

Now this is going to sound crazy, I know. It sounded pretty crazy to me when I thought of it. It dawned on me with a sort of revelation that her word for talk and mine were miles apart. Talk, to her, meant a complex interchange involving all parts of the body. She could read words or emotions in every twitch of my muscles, like a lie detector. Sound, to her, was only a minor part of communication. It was something she used to speak to outsiders. Pink talked with her whole being.

I didn't have the half of it, even then, but it was enough to turn my head entirely around in relation to these people. They talked with their bodies. It wasn't all hands, as I'd thought. Any part of the body in contact with all other was communication, sometimes a very simple and basic sort — think of McLuhan's light bulb as the basic medium of information — perhaps saying no more than "I am here." But talk was talk, and if conversation evolved to the point where you needed to talk to another with your genitals, it was still a part of the conversation. What I wanted to know was *what were they saying?* I knew, even at that dim moment of realization, that it was much more than I could grasp. Sure, you're saying. You know about talking to your lover with your body as you make love. That's not such a new idea. Of course it isn't, but think how wonderful that talk is even when you're not primarily tactile-oriented. Can you carry the thought from there, or are you doomed to be an earthworm thinking about sunsets?

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

While this was happening to me, there was a woman getting acquainted with my body. Her hands were on me, in my lap, when I felt myself ejaculating. It was a big surprise to me, but to no one else. I had been telling everyone around me for many minutes that it was going to happen through signs they could feel with their hands. Instantly, hands were all over my body. I could almost understand them as they spelled tender thoughts to me. I got the gist, anyway, if not the words. I was terribly embarrassed for only a moment; then it passed away in the face of the easy acceptance. It was very intense. For a long time I couldn't get my breath.

The woman who had been the cause of it touched my lips with her fingers. She moved them slowly, but meaningfully I was sure. Then she melted back into the group.

"What did she say?" I asked Pink.

She smiled at me. "You know, of course. If you'd only cut loose from your verbalizing. But, generally, she meant 'How nice for you.' It also translates as 'How nice for me.' And 'me,' in this sense, means all of us. The organism."

I knew I had to stay and learn to speak.

The commune had its ups and downs. They had expected them, in general, but had not known what shape they might take.

Winter killed many of their fruit trees. They replaced them with hybrid strains. They lost more fertilizer and soil in windstorms because the clover had not had time to anchor it down. Their schedule had been thrown off by the court actions, and they didn't really get things settled in a groove until the following year.

Their fish all died. They used the bodies for fertilizer and looked into what might have gone wrong. They were using a three stage ecology of the type pioneered by the New Alchemists in the '70's. It consisted of three domed ponds: one containing fish, another with crushed shells and bacteria in one section and algae in another, and a third full of daphnids. The water containing fish waste from the first pond was pumped through the shells and bacteria which detoxified it and converted the ammonia it contained into fertilizer for the algae. The algae water was pumped into the second pond to feed the daphnids. Then daphnids and algae were pumped to the fish pond as food and the enriched water was used to fertilize greenhouse plants in all of the domes.

They tested the water and the soil and found that chemicals were being leached from impurities in the shells and concentrated down

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

the food chain. After a thorough clean-up and a re-start, all went well. But they had lost their first cash crop.

They never went hungry. Nor were they cold; there was plenty of sunlight year-round, both to power the pumps and the food cycle and heat their living quarters. They had built their buildings half-buried with an eye to the heating and cooling powers of convective currents. But they had to spend some of their capital. The first year they showed a loss.

One of their buildings caught fire during the first winter. Two men and a small girl were killed when a sprinkler system malfunctioned. This was a shock to them. They had thought things would operate as advertised. None of them knew much about the building trades, about estimates as opposed to realities. They found that several of their installations were not up to specs and instituted a program of periodic checks on everything. They learned to strip down and repair anything on the farm. If something contained electronics too complex for them to cope with, they tore it out and installed something simpler.

Socially, their progress had been much more encouraging. Janet had wisely decided that there would be only two hard and fast objectives in the realm of their relationships. The first was that she refused to be their president, chairwoman, chief, or supreme commander. She had seen from the start that a driving personality was needed to get the planning done and the land bought and foster a sense of purpose from their formless desire for an alternative. But once at the promised land, she abdicated. They would operate from that point as a democratic communism. If that failed, they would adopt a new approach. Anything but a dictatorship with her at the head. She wanted no part of that.

The second principle was to accept nothing. There had never been a blind-deaf community operating on its own. They had no expectations to satisfy; they did not need to live as the sighted did. They were alone. There was no one to tell them not to do something simply because it was not done.

They had no clearer idea of what their society would be than anyone else. They had been forced into a mold that was not relevant to their needs, but beyond that they didn't know. They would search out the behavior that made sense, the moral things for blind-deaf people to do. They understood the basic principles of morals: that nothing is moral always, and anything is moral under the right circumstances. It all had to do with social

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

context. They were starting from a blank slate, with no models to follow.

By the end of the second year they had their context. They continually modified it, but the basic pattern was set. They knew themselves and what they were as they had never been able to do at the school. They defined themselves in their own terms.

I spent my first day at Keller in school. It was the obvious and necessary step. I had to learn hand-talk.

Pink was kind and very patient. I learned the basic alphabet and practiced hard at it. By the afternoon she was refusing to talk to me, forcing me to speak with my hands. She would speak only when pressed hard, and eventually not at all. I scarcely spoke a single oral word after the third day.

This is not to say that I was suddenly fluent. Not at all. At the end of the first day I knew the alphabet and could laboriously make myself understood. I was not so good at reading words spelled into my own palm. For a long time I had to look at the hand to see what was spelled. But like any language, eventually you think in it. I speak fluent French, and I recall the amazement when I finally reached the point where I wasn't translating my thoughts before I spoke. I reached it at Keller in about two weeks.

I remember one of the last things I asked Pink in speech. It was something that was worrying me.

"Pink, am I welcome here?"

"You've been here three days. Do you feel rejected?"

"No, it's not that. I guess I just need to hear your policy about outsiders. How *long* am I welcome?"

She wrinkled her brow. It was evidently a new question.

"Well, practically speaking, until a majority of us decide we want you to go. But that's never happened. No one's stayed here much longer than a few days. We've never had to evolve a policy about what to do, for instance, if someone who sees and hears wants to join us. No one has, so far, but I guess it could happen. My guess is that they wouldn't accept it. They're very independent and jealous of their freedom, though you might not have seen it. I don't think you could ever be one of them. But as long as you're willing to think of yourself as a guest, you could probably stay for twenty years."

"You said 'they.' Don't you include yourself in the group?"

For the first time she looked a little uneasy. I wish I had been better at reading body language at the time. I think my hands could

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

have told me volumes about what she was thinking.

"Sure," she said. "The children are part of the group. We like it. I sure wouldn't want to be anywhere else, from what I know of the outside."

"I don't blame you." There were things left unsaid here, but I didn't know enough to ask the right question. "But it's never a problem, being able to see when none of your parents can? They don't ... resent you in any way?"

This time she laughed. "Oh, no. Never that. They're much too independent for that. You've seen it. They don't *need* us for anything they can't do themselves. We're part of the family. We do exactly the same things they do. And it really doesn't matter. Sight, I mean. Hearing, either. Just look around you. Do I have any special advantages because I see where I'm going?"

I had to admit that she didn't. But there was still the hint of something she wasn't saying to me.

"I know what's bothering you. About staying here." She had to draw me back to my original question; I had been wandering.

"What's that?"

"You don't feel a part of the daily life. You're not doing your share of the chores. You're very conscientious and you want to do your part. I can tell."

She read me right, as usual, and I admitted it.

"And you won't be able to until you can talk to everybody. So let's get back to your lessons. Your fingers are still very sloppy."

There was a lot of work to be done. The first thing I had to learn was to slow down. They were slow and methodical workers, made few mistakes, and didn't care if a job took all day as long as it was done well. If I was working by myself I didn't have to worry about it: sweeping, picking apples, weeding in the gardens. But when I was on a job that required teamwork, I had to learn a whole new pace. Eyesight enables a person to do many aspects of a job at once with a few quick glances. A blind person will take each aspect of the job in turn if the job is spread out. Everything has to be verified by touch. At a bench job, though, they could be much faster than I. They could make me feel like I was working with my toes instead of fingers.

I never suggested that I could make anything quicker by virtue of my sight or hearing. They quite rightly would have told me to mind my own business. Accepting sighted help was the first step to dependence, and, after all, they would still be here with the same jobs to do after I was gone.

And that got me to thinking

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

about the children again. I began to be positive that there was an undercurrent of resentment, maybe unconscious, between parent and child. It was obvious that there was a great deal of love between them, but how could the children fail to resent the rejection of their talent? So my reasoning went, anyway.

I quickly fit myself into the routine. I was treated no better and no worse than anyone else, which gratified me. Though I would never become part of the group, even if I should desire it, there was absolutely no indication that I was anything but a full member. That's just how they treated guests: as they would one of their own number.

Life was fulfilling out there in a way it has never been in the cities. It wasn't unique to Keller, this pastoral peace, but they had it in generous helpings. The earth beneath your bare feet is something you can never feel in a city park.

Daily life was busy and satisfying. There were chickens and hogs to feed, bees and sheep to care for, fish to harvest and cows to milk. Everybody worked: men, women, and children. It all seemed to fit together without any apparent effort. Everybody seemed to know what to do when it needed doing. You could think of it as a well-oiled machine, but I never liked that metaphor, especially for people. I thought of it as an organism. Any social group is, but this one *worked.* Most of the other communes I'd visited had glaring flaws. Things would not get done because everyone was too stoned or couldn't be bothered or didn't see the necessity of doing it in the first place. That sort of ignorance leads to typhus and soil erosion and people freezing to death and invasions of social workers who take your children away. I'd seen it happen.

Not here. They had a good picture of the world-as-it-is, not the rosy misconceptions so many other utopians labor under. They did the jobs that needed doing.

I could never detail all the nuts and bolts (there's that machine metaphor again) of how the place worked. The fish-cycle ponds alone were complicated enough to overawe me. I killed a spider in one of the greenhouses, then found out it had been put there to eat a specific set of plant predators. Same for the frogs. There were insects in the water to kill other insects, and it got to where I was afraid to swat a mayfly without prior okay.

As the days went by, I was told some of the history of the place. There were mistakes that had been made, though surprisingly few. One had been in the area of defense. They had made no provision for it

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

at first, not knowing much about the brutality and random violence that reaches even to the out-of-the-way corners. Guns were the logical and preferred choice out here but were beyond their capabilities.

One night a carload of men who had had too much to drink showed up. They had heard of the place in town. They stayed for two days, cutting the phone lines and raping many of the women.

The people discussed all the options after the invasion was over, and they settled on the organic one. They bought five German shepherds. Not the psychotic wretches that are marketed under the description of "attack dogs," but specially trained ones from a firm recommended by the Albuquerque police. They were trained both as seeing-eye and police dogs. They were perfectly harmless until an outsider showed overt aggression; then they were trained not to disarm, but to go for the throat.

It worked, like most of their solutions. The second invasion resulted in two dead and three badly injured, all on the other side. As a back-up in case of a concerted attack, they hired an ex-marine to teach them the fundamentals of close-in dirty fighting. These were not dewy-eyed flower children.

There were three superb meals a day. And there was leisure time, too. It was not all work. There was time for someone to stop working for a few minutes, to share some special treasure. I remember being taken by the hand by one woman — who — I must call Tall-one-with-the-green-eyes — to a spot where mushrooms were growing in the cool crawl-space beneath the barn. We wriggled under until our faces were buried in the patch, picked a few, and smelled them. She showed me how to smell. I would have thought a few weeks before that we had ruined their beauty, but, after all, it was only visual. I was already beginning to discount that sense, which is so removed from the essence of an object. She showed me that they were still beautiful to touch and smell after we had apparently destroyed them. Then she was off to the kitchen with the pick of the bunch in her apron. They tasted all the better that night.

And a man — I will call him Baldy — who brought me a plank he and one of the women had been planing in the woodshop. I touched its smoothness and smelled it and agreed with him how good it was.

And after the evening meal, the Together.

During my third week there, I had an indication of my status with the group. It was the first real test of whether I meant anything to them. Anything special, I mean. I wanted to see them as my friends,

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

and I suppose I was a little upset to think that just anyone who wandered in here would be treated the same as I was. It was childish and unfair to them, and I wasn't even aware of the discontent until later.

I had been hauling water in a bucket into the field where a seedling tree was being planted. There was a hose for that purpose, but it was in use on the other side of the village. This tree was not in reach of the automatic sprinklers and it was drying out. I had been carrying water to it while another solution was found.

It was hot, around noon. I got the water from a standing spigot near the forge. I set the bucket down on the ground behind me and leaned my head into the flow of water. I was wearing a shirt made of cotton, unbuttoned in the front. The water felt good running through my hair and soaking into the shirt. I let it go on for almost a minute.

There was a crash behind me, and I bumped my head when I raised it up too quickly under the faucet. I turned and saw a woman sprawled on her face in the dust. She was turning over slowly, holding her knee. I realized with a sinking feeling that she had tripped over the bucket I had carelessly left on the concrete express lane. Think of it: ambling along on ground that you trust to be free of all obstruction, suddenly you're sitting on the ground. Their system would only work with trust, and it had to be total, and everybody had to be responsible all the time. I had been accepted into that trust, and I had blown it. I felt sick.

She had a nasty scrape on her left knee that was oozing blood. She felt it with her hands, sitting there on the ground, and she began to howl. It was weird, painful. Tears came from her eyes; then she pounded her fists on the ground, going "Hunnnh, hunnnh, *hunnn!*" with each blow. She was angry, and she had every right to be.

She found the pail as I hesitantly reached out for her. She grabbed my hand and followed it up to my face. She felt my face, crying all the time, then wiped her nose and got up. She started off for one of the buildings. She limped slightly.

I sat down and felt miserable. I didn't know what to do.

One of the men came out to get me. It was Big Man. I called him that because he was the tallest of anyone at Keller. He wasn't any sort of policeman, I found out later; he was just the first one the injured woman had met. He took my hand and felt my face. I saw tears start when he felt the emotions there. He asked me to come inside with him.

An impromptu panel had been

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

convened. Call it a jury. It was made up of anyone who was handy, including a few children. There were ten or twelve of them. Everyone looked very sad. The woman I had hurt was there, being consoled by three or four people. I'll call her Scar, for the prominent mark on her upper arm.

Everybody kept telling me — in hand-talk, you understand — how sorry they were for me. They petted and stroked me, trying to draw some of the misery away.

Pink came racing in. She had been sent for to act as a translator if needed. Since this was a formal proceeding, it was necessary that they be sure I understood everything that happened. She went to Scar and cried with her for a bit, then came to me and embraced me fiercely, telling me with her hands how sorry she was that this had happened. I was already figuratively packing my bags. Nothing seemed to be left but the formality of expelling me.

Then we all sat together on the floor. We were close, touching on all sides. The hearing began.

Most of it was in hand-talk, with Pink throwing in a few words here and there. I seldom knew who said what, but that was appropriate. It was the group speaking as one. No statement reached me without already having become a consensus.

"You are accused of having violated the rules," said the group, "and of having been the cause of an injury to (the one I called Scar). Do you dispute this? Is there any fact that we should know?"

"No," I told them. "I was responsible. It was my carelessness."

"We understand. We sympathize with you in your remorse, which is evident to all of us. But carelessness is a violation. Do you understand this? This is the offense for which you are —." It was a set of signals in shorthand.

"What was that?" I asked Pink.

"Uh ... 'brought before us?' 'Standing trial?'" She shrugged, not happy with either interpretation.

"Yes. I understand."

"The facts not being in question, it is agreed that you are guilty." ("'Responsible,'" Pink whispered in my ear.) "Withdraw from us a moment while we come to a decision."

I got up and stood by the wall, not wanting to look at them as a debate went back and forth through the joined hands. There was a burning lump in my throat that I could not swallow. Then I was asked to rejoin the circle.

"The penalty for your offense is set by custom. If it were not so, we would wish we could rule otherwise. You now have the choice of accept-

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

ing the punishment designated and having the offense wiped away, or of refusing our jurisdiction and withdrawing your body from our land. What is you choice?"

I had Pink repeat this to me, because it was so important that I know what was being offered. When I was sure I had read it right, I accepted their punishment without hesitation. I was very grateful to have been given an alternative.

"Very well. You have elected to be treated as we would treat one of our own who had done the same act. Come to us."

The group lost its discrete circle as everyone drew in closer. I was not told what was going to happen. I was drawn in and nudged gently from all directions.

Scar was sitting with her legs crossed more or less in the center of the group. She was crying again, and so was I, I think. It's hard to remember. I ended up face-down across her lap. She spanked me.

I never once thought of it as improbable or strange. It flowed naturally out of the situation. Everyone was holding on to me and caressing me, spelling assurances into my palms and legs and neck and cheeks. We were all crying. It was a difficult thing that had to be faced by the whole group. Others drifted from everyone there, but only the offended person, Scar, did the actual spanking. That was one of the ways I had wronged her, beyond the fact of giving her a scraped knee. I had laid on her the obligation of disciplining me, and that was why she had sobbed so loudly, not the pain of her injury but the pain of knowing she would have to hurt me.

Pink later told me that Scar had been the staunchest advocate of giving me the option to stay. Some had wanted to expel me right out, but she paid me the compliment of thinking I was a good-enough person to be worth putting herself and me through the ordeal. If you can't understand that, you haven't grasped the feeling of community I felt for these people.

It went on for a long time. It was very painful, but not cruel. Nor was it primarily humiliating. There was some of that, of course. But it was essentially a practical lesson taught in the most direct terms. Each of them had undergone it during the first months, but none recently. You *learned* from it, believe me.

I did a lot of thinking about it afterwards. I tried to think of what else they might have done. Spanking grown people is really unheard of, you know, though that didn't occur to me until long after it happened. It seemed so natural when it was going on that the thought couldn't even enter my mind that this was a weird situation

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

to be in.

They did something like this with the children, but not as long or as hard. There was a consensual lightening of responsibility for the younger ones. The adults were willing to put up with an occasional bruise or scraped knee while the children learned.

But when you reached what they thought of as adulthood — which was whenever a majority of the adults thought you were or when you assumed the privilege yourself — that's when the spanking really got serious.

They had a harsher punishment, reserved for repeated or malicious offenses. They had not had to invoke it often. It consisted of being sent to coventry. No one would touch you for a specified period of time. By the time I heard of it, it sounded like a very tough penalty. I didn't need it explained to me.

I don't know how to explain it, but the spanking was administered in such a loving way that I didn't feel violated. *This hurts me as much as it hurts you. I'm doing this for your own good. I love you, that's why I'm hurting you.* They made me understand those old cliches by their actions.

When it was over, we all cried together. But it soon turned to happiness. I embraced Scar and we told each other how sorry we were that it had happened. We talked to each other — made love if you like — and I kissed her knee and helped her dress it.

We spent the rest of the day together, easing the pain.

As I became more fluent in hand-talk, "the scales fell from my eyes." Daily, I would discover a new layer of meaning that had eluded me before, like peeling the skin of an onion to find a new skin beneath it. Each time I thought I was at the core, only to find that there was another layer I could not yet see.

I had thought that learning hand-talk was the key to communication with them. Not so. Hand-talk was baby talk. For a long time I was a baby who could not even say goo-goo clearly. Imagine my surprise when, having learned to say it, I found that there were syntax, conjugations, parts of speech, nouns, verbs, tense, agreement, and the subjunctive mood. I was wading in a tidepool at the edge of the Pacific Ocean.

By hand-talk, I mean the International Manual Alphabet. Anyone can learn it in a few hours or days. But when you talk to someone in speech, do you spell each word? Do you read each letter as you read this? No, you grasp words as entities, hear groups of sounds and see groups of letters as a gestalt full of meaning.

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

Everyone at Keller had an absorbing interest in language. They each knew several languages — spoken languages — and could read and spell them fluently.

While still children they had understood the fact that hand-talk was a way for blind-deaf people to talk to *outsiders*. Among themselves it was much too cumbersome. It was like Morse Code: useful when you're limited to on-off modes of information transmission, but not the preferred mode. Their ways of speaking to each other were much closer to our type of written or verbal communication, and — dare I say it? — better.

I discovered this slowly, first by seeing that, though I could spell rapidly with my hands, it took *much* longer for me to say something than it took anyone else. It could not be explained by differences in dexterity. So I asked to be taught their shorthand speech. I plunged in, this time taught by everyone, not just Pink.

It was hard. They could say any word in any language with no more than two moving-hand positions. I knew this was a project for years, not days. You learn the alphabet and you have all the tools you need to spell any word there is. That's the great advantage in having your written and spoken speech based on the same set of symbols. Shorthand was not like that at all. It partook of none of the linearity or commonality of hand-talk; it was not code for English or any other language; it did not share construction or vocabulary with any other language. It was wholly constructed by the Kellerites according to their needs. Each word was something I had to learn and memorize separate from the hand-talk spelling.

For months I sat in the Togethers after dinner saying things like "Me love Scar much much well," while waves of conversation ebbed and flowed and circled around me, touching me only at the edges. But I kept at it, and the children were endlessly patient with me. I improved gradually. Understand that the rest of the conversations I will relate took place in either hand-talk or shorthand, limited to various degrees by my fluency. I did not speak nor was I spoken to orally from the day of my punishment.

I was having a lesson in body-talk from Pink. Yes, we were making love. It had taken me a few weeks to see that she was a sexual being, that her caresses which I had persisted in seeing as innocent — as I had defined it at the time — both were and weren't innocent. She understood it as perfectly natural that the result of her talking to my penis with her hands might be

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

another sort of conversation. Though still in the middle flush of puberty, she was regarded by all as an adult, and I accepted her as such. It was my cultural conditioning that had blinded me to what she was saying.

So we talked a lot. With her, I understood the words and music of the body better than with anyone else. She sang a very uninhabited song with her hips and hands, free of guilt, open and fresh with discovery in every note she touched.

"You haven't told me much about yourself," she said. "What did you do on the outside?" I don't want to give the impression that this speech was in sentences, as I have presented it. We were body-talking, sweating and smelling each other. The message came through from hands, feet, mouth.

I got as far as the sign for pronoun, first-person singular — and was stopped.

How could I tell her of my life in Chicago? Should I speak of my early ambition to be a writer and how that didn't work out? And why hadn't it? I could tell her about my drive? I could tell her about my profession, which was meaningless shuffling of papers when you got down to it, useless to anything but the Gross National Product. I could talk of the economic ups and downs that had bought me here when nothing else could dislodge me from my easy sliding through life. Or the loneliness of being forty-seven years old and never having found someone worth loving, never having been loved in return. Of being a permanently displaced person in a stainless-steel society. One-night stands, drinking binges, nine-to-five, Chicago Transit Authority, dark movie houses, football games on television, sleeping pills, the John Hancock Tower where the windows won't open so you can't breathe the smog or jump out. That was me, wasn't it?

"I see," she said.

"I travel around," I said and suddenly realized that it was the truth.

"I see," she repeated. It was a different sign for the same thing. Context was everything. She had heard and understood both parts of me, knew one to be what I had been, the other to be what I hoped I was.

She lay on top of me, one hand lightly on my face to catch the quick interplay of emotions as I thought about my life for the first time in years. And she laughed and nipped my ear playfully when my face told her that for the first time I could remember, I was happy about it. Not just telling myself I was happy, but for true. You cannot lie on body-talk any more than your sweat glands can lie on a

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

polygraph.

I noticed that the room was unusually empty. Asking around in my fumbling way, I got a rough picture that only the children were here.

"Where is everybody?" I asked.

"They are all out ***," she said. It was like that: three sharp slaps on the chest with the fingers spread. Along with the finger configuration for "verb form, gerund," it meant that they were all out ***ing. Needless to say, it didn't tell me much.

What did tell me something was her body-talk as she said it. I read her better than I ever had. She was upset and sad. Her body said something like "Why can't I join them? Why can't I (smell-taste-touch-hear-see) sense with them?" That is exactly what she said. Again, I didn't trust my understanding enough to go with that interpretation. I was still trying to force my conceptions around the things I experienced here. I was determined that she and the other children be resentful of their parents in some way, because I was sure they had to be. They *must* feel superior in some way, they *must* feel held back.

I found them, after a short search of the area, out in the north pasture. All the parents, none of the children. They were standing in a group with no apparent pattern. It wasn't a circle, but it was almost round. If there was any organization, it was in the fact that everybody was about the same distance from everybody else.

The German shepherds and the sheltie were out there, sitting on the cool grass facing the group of people. Their ears were perked up, but they were not moving.

I started to go up to the people. I stopped when I became aware of the concentration. They were touching, but their hands were not moving. The silence of seeing all those permanently moving people standing that still was deafening to me.

I watched them for at least an hour. I sat with the dogs and scratched them behind the ears. They did that chop-licking thing that dogs do when they appreciate it, but their full attention was on the group.

It gradually dawned on me that the group was moving. It was very slow, just a step here and another there over many minutes. It was expanding in such a way that the distance between any of the individuals was the same. Like the expanding universe, where all galaxies move away from all others. Their arms were extended now; they were touching only with fingertips in a crystal lattice arrangement.

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

Finally they were not touching at all. I saw their fingers straining to cover distances that were too far to bridge. And still they expanded equilaterally. One of the shepherds began to whimper a little. I felt the hair on the back on my neck standing up. Chilly out here, I thought.

I closed my eyes, suddenly sleepy.

I opened them, shocked. Then I forced them shut. Crickets were chirping in the grass around me.

There was something in the darkness behind my eyeballs. I felt that if I could turn my eyes around I would see it easily, but it eluded me in a way that made peripheral vision seem like reading headlines. If there was ever anything impossible to pin down, much less describe, that was it. It tickled at me for a while as the dogs whimpered louder, but I could make nothing of it. The best analogy I could think of was the sensation a blind person might feel from the sun on a cloudy day.

I opened my eyes again.

Pink was standing there beside me. Her eyes were screwed shut, and she was covering her ears with her hands. Her mouth was open and working silently. Behind her were several of the older children. They were all doing the same thing.

Some quality of the night changed. The people in the group were about a foot away from each other now, and suddenly the pattern broke. They all swayed for a moment, then laughed in that eerie, unself-conscious noise deaf people use for laughter. They fell in the grass and held their bellies, rolled over and over and roared.

Pink was laughing, too. To my surprise, so was I. I laughed until my face and sides were hurting, like I remembered doing sometimes when I'd smoked grass.

And that was ***ing.

—

I can see that I've only given a surface view of Keller. And there are some things I should deal with, lest I foster an erroneous view.

Clothing, for instance. Most of them wore something most of the time. Pink was the only one who seemed temperamentally opposed to them. She never wore anything.

No one ever wore anything I'd call a pair of pants. Clothes were loose; robes, shirts, dresses, scarves, and such. Lots of men wore things that would be called women's clothes. They were simply more comfortable.

Much of it was ragged. It tended to be made of silk or velvet or something else that felt good. The stereotyped Kellerite would be wearing a Japanese silk robe, hand-embroidered with dragons, with many gaping holes and loose threads and tea and tomato stains

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

all over it while she sloshed through the pigpen with a bucket of slop. Wash it at the end of the day and don't worry about the colors running.

I also don't seem to have mentioned homosexuality. You can mark it down to my early conditioning that my two deepest relationships at Keller were with women: Pink and Scar. I haven't said anything about it simply because I don't know how to present it. I talked to men and women equally, on the same terms. I had surprisingly little trouble being affectionate with the men.

I could not think of the Kellerites as bisexual, though clinically they were. It was much deeper than that. They could not even recognize a concept as poisonous as a homosexuality taboo. It was one of the first things they learned. If you distinguish homosexuality from heterosexuality, you are cutting yourself off from communication — *full* communication — with half the human race. They were pansexual; they could not separate sex from the rest of their lives. They didn't even have a word in shorthand that could translate directly into English as sex. They had words for male and female in infinite variation and words for degrees and varieties of physical experience that would be impossible to express in English, but all those words included other parts of the world of experience also, none of them walled off what we call *sex* into its own discrete cubbyhole.

There's another question I haven't answered. it needs answering, because I wondered about it myself when I first arrived. It concerns the necessity for the commune in the first place. Did it really have to be like this? Would they have been better off adjusting themselves to our ways of living?

All was not a peaceful idyll. I already spoke of the invasion and rape. It could happen again, especially if the roving gangs that operate around the cities start to really rove. A touring group of motorcyclists could wipe them out in a night.

There were also continuing legal hassles. About once a year the social workers descended on Keller and tried to take their children away. They had been attacked every way it was possible to be attacked, from child abuse to contributing to the delinquency.... It hadn't worked so far, but it might someday.

And, after all, there are sophisticated devices on the market that allow a blind and deaf person to see and hear a little.

I met a blind-deaf woman living in Berkeley once. I'll vote for Keller.

As to those machines ... .

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

In the library at Keller there is a seeing machine. It uses a television camera and a computer to vibrate a close-set series of metal pins. Using it, you can feel a moving picture of whatever the camera is pointed at. It's small and light, made to be carried with the pinpricker touching your back. It costs about thirty-five thousand dollars.

I found it in the corner of the library. I ran my finger over it and left a gleaming streak behind as the thick dust came away.

Other people came and went, and stayed on.

They didn't get as many visitors as the other places I had been. They were out of the way.

One man showed up at noon, looked around, and left without a word.

Two girls, sixteen-year-old runaways from California, showed up one night. They undressed for dinner and were shocked when they found out I could see. Pink scared the hell out of them. Those poor kids had a lot of living to do before they approached Pink's level of sophistication. But then Pink might have been uneasy in California. They left the next day, unsure if they had been to an orgy or not. All that touching and no getting down to business: very strange.

There was a nice couple from Santa Fe who acted as a sort of liaison between Keller and their lawyer. They had a nine-year-old boy who chattered endlessly in hand-talk to the other kids. They came up about every other week and stayed a few days, soaking up sunshine and participating in the Together every night. They spoke halting shorthand and did me the courtesy of not speaking to me in speech.

Some of the Indians came around at odd intervals. Their behavior was almost aggressively chauvinistic. They stayed dressed at all times in their levis and boots. But it was evident that they had a respect for the people, though they thought them strange. They had business dealings with the commune. it was the Navahos who trucked away the produce that was taken to the gate every day, sold it, and took a percentage. They would sit and powwow in sign language spelled into hands. Pink said they were scrupulously honest in their dealings.

And about once a week all the parents went out in the field and ***ed.

I got better and better at shorthand and body-talk. I had been breezing along for about five months, and winter was in the offing. I had not examined my desires as yet, not really thought about what it was I wanted to do

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

with the rest of my life. I guess the habit of letting myself drift was too ingrained. I was here and constitutionally unable either to decide to go or face up to the problem if I wanted to stay for a long, long time.

Then I got a push.

For a long time I thought it had something to do with the economic situation outside. They were aware of the outside world at Keller. They knew that isolation and ignoring problems that could easily be dismissed as not relevant to them was a dangerous course. So they subscribed to the Braille *New York Times* and most of them read it. They had a television set that got plugged in about once a month. The kids would watch it and translate for their parents.

So I was aware that the nondepression was moving slowly into a more normal inflationary spiral. Jobs were opening up, money was flowing again. When I found myself on the outside again shortly afterwards, I thought that was the reason.

The real reason was more complex. It had to do with peeling off the onion layer of shorthand and discovering another layer beneath it.

I had learned hand-talk in a few easy lessons. Then I became aware of shorthand and body-talk and of how much harder they would be to learn. Through five months of constant immersion, which is the only way to learn a language, I had attained the equivalent level of a five or six-year-old in shorthand. I knew I could master it, given time. Body-talk was another matter. You couldn't measure progress as easily in body-talk. It was a variable and highly interpersonal language that evolved according to the person, the time, the mood. But I was learning.

Then I became aware of Touch. That's the best I can describe it in a single, unforced English noun. What *they* called this fourth-stage language varied from day to day, as I will try to explain.

I first became aware of it when I tried to meet Janet Reilly. I now knew all the formative history of Keller, and she figured very prominently in all the stories. I knew everyone at Keller, and I could find her nowhere. I knew everyone by names like Scar, and She - with - the - missing - front - tooth, and Man - with - wiry - hair. These were shorthand names that I had given them myself, and they all accepted them without question. They had abolished their outside names within the commune. They meant nothing to them; they told nothing and described nothing.

At first I assumed that it was my imperfect command of shorthand that made me unable to clearly ask the right question about Janet Reilly. Then I saw that they

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

were not telling me on purpose. I saw why, and I approved, and thought no more about it. The name Janet Reilly described what she had been *on the outside,* and one of her conditions for pushing the whole thing through in the first place had been that she be no one special on the inside. She had melted into the group and disappeared. She didn't want to be found. All right.

But in the course of pursuing the question I became aware that each of the members of the commune had no specific name at all. That is, Pink, for instance, had no fewer than one hundred and fifteen names, one from each of the commune members. Each was a contextual name that told the story of Pink's relationship to a particular person. My simple physical-description names were accepted as the names a child would apply to people. The children had not yet learned to go beneath the outer layers and use names that told of themselves, their lives, and their relationships to others.

What is even more confusing, the names evolved from day to day. It was my first glimpse of Touch, and it frightened me. It was a question of permutations. Just the first simple expansion of the problem meant there were no fewer than thirteen thousand names in use, and they wouldn't stay still so I could memorize them. If Pink spoke to me of Baldy, for instance, she would use her Touch name for him, modified by the fact that she was speaking to me, and not Short-chubby-man.

Then the depth of what I had been missing opened beneath me, and I was suddenly breathless with fear of heights.

Touch was what they spoke to each other. It was an incredible blend of all three other modes I had learned, and the essence of it was that it never stayed the same. I could listen to them speak to me in shorthand, which was the real basis for Touch, and be just aware of the currents of Touch flowing just beneath the surface.

It was a language of inventing languages. Everyone spoke their own dialect because everyone spoke with a different instrument: a different body and set of life experiences. It was modified by everything. *It would not stand still.*

They would sit at the Together and invent an entire body of Touch responses in a night; idiomatic, personal, totally naked in its honesty. And they used it only as a building block for the next night's language.

I didn't know if I wanted to be that naked. I had looked into myself a little recently and had not been satisfied with what I found.

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

The realization that every one of them knew more about it than I because my honest body had told what my frightened mind had not wanted to reveal was shattering. I was naked under a spotlight in Carnegie Hall, and all the no-pants nightmares I ever had come out to haunt me. The fact that they all loved me with all my warts was suddenly not enough. I wanted to curl up in a dark closet with my ingrown ego and let it fester.

I might have come through this fear. Pink was certainly trying to help me. She told me that it would only hurt for a while, that I would quickly adjust to living my life with my darkest emotions written in fire across my forehead. She said Touch was not as hard as it looked at first, either. Once I learned shorthand and body-talk, Touch would flow naturally from it like sap rising in a tree. It would be unavoidable, something that would happen to me without much effort at all.

I almost believed her. But she betrayed herself. No, no, no. Not that, but the things in her concerning ***ing convinced me that if I went through this I would only bang my head hard against the next step up the ladder.

***

I had a little better definition now. Not one that I can easily translate into English, and even that attempt will only convey my hazy concept of what it was.

"It is the mode of touching," Pink said, her body going like crazy in an attempt to reach me with her own imperfect concept of what it was, handicapped by my illiteracy. Her body denied the truth of her shorthand definition, and at the same time admitted to me that she did not know what it was herself.

"It is the gift whereby one can expand oneself from the eternal quiet and dark into something else." And again her body denied it. She beat on the floor in exasperation.

"It is an attribute of being in the quiet and dark all the time, touching others. All I know for sure is that vision and hearing preclude it or obscure it. I can make it as quiet and dark as I possibly can and be aware of the edges of it, but the visual orientation of the mind persists. That door is closed to me, and to all the children."

Her verb "to touch" in the first part of that was a Touch amalgam, one that reached back into her memories of me and what I had told her of my experiences. It implied and called up the smell and feel of broken mushrooms in soft earth under the barn with (Tall-one-with-green-eyes, she who taught me to feel the essence of an object). It also contained references to our body-talking while I was penetrating into dark and wet of

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

her, and her running account to me of what it was like to receive me into herself. This was all one word.

I brooded on that for a long time. What was the point of suffering through the nakedness of Touch, only to reach the level of frustrated blindness enjoyed by Pink?

What was it that kept pushing me away from the one place in my life where I had been happiest?

One thing was the realization, quite late in coming, that can be summed up as "What the hell am I *doing* here?" The question that should have answered that question was "What the hell would I do if I *left?*"

I was the only visitor, the only one in *seven years* to stay at Keller for longer than a few days. I brooded on that. I was not strong enough or confident enough in my opinion of myself to see it as anything but a flaw in *me,* not in those others. I was obviously too easily satisfied, too complacent to see the flaws that those others had seen.

It didn't have to be flaws in the people of Keller or in their system. No, I loved and respected them too much to think that. What they had going here was certainly as near as anyone has ever come in this imperfect world to a sane, rational way for people to exist without warfare and with a minimum of politics. In the end, those two old dinosaurs are the only ways humans have yet discovered to be social animals. Yes, I do see war as a way of living with another, by imposing your will on another in terms so unmistakable that the opponent has to either knuckle under to you, die, or beat your brains out. And if that's a solution to anything, I'd rather live without solutions. Politics is not much better. The only thing going for it is that it occasionally succeeds in substituting talk for fists.

Keller *was* an organism. It was a new way of relating, and it seemed to work. I'm not pushing it as a solution for the world's problems. It's possible that it could only work for a group with a common self-interest as binding and rare as deafness and blindness. I can't think of another group whose needs are so interdependent.

The cells of the organism cooperated beautifully. The organism was strong, flourishing, and possessed of all the attributes I've ever heard of for defining life except the ability to reproduce. That might have been its fatal flaw, if any. I certainly saw the seeds of something developing in the children.

The strength of the organism was communication. There's no way around it. Without the

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

elaborate and impossible-to-falsify mechanisms for communication built into Keller, it would have eaten itself in pettiness, jealousy, possessiveness, and any dozen other "innate" human defects.

The nightly Together was the basis of the organism. Here, from after dinner to time to fall asleep, everyone talked in a language that was incapable of falsehood. If there was a problem brewing, it presented itself and was solved almost automatically. Jealousy? Resentment? Some little festering wrong that you're nursing? You couldn't conceal it at the Together, and soon everyone was clustered around you and loving the sickness away. It was like white corpuscles clustering around a sick cell, not to destroy it, but to heal it. There seemed to be no problem that couldn't be solved if it was attacked early enough, and, with Touch, your neighbors knew about it before you did and were already laboring to correct the wrong, heal the wound, to make you feel better so you could laugh about it. There was a lot of laughter at the Togethers.

I thought for a while that I was feeling possessive about Pink. I know I had done so a little at first. Pink was my special friend, the one who had helped me out from the first, who for several days was the only one I could talk to. It was her hands that taught me hand-talk, all by herself. I know I felt stirrings of territoriality the first time she lay in my lap while another man made love to her. But if there was any signal the Kellerites were adept at reading, it was that one. It went off like an alarm bell in Pink, the man, and the women and men around me. They soothed me, coddled me, told me in every language that it was all right, not to feel ashamed. Then the man in question began loving *me*. Not Pink, but the man. An observational anthropologist would have had subject matter for a whole thesis. Have you seen the films of baboons' social behavior? Dogs do it, too; many male mammals do it. When males get into dominance battles, the weaker can defuse the aggression by submitting by turning tail and surrendering. I have never felt so defused as when that man surrendered the object of our clash of wills — Pink — and turned his attention to me. What could I do? What I did was laugh, and he laughed, and soon we were all laughing, and that was the end of territoriality.

That's the essence of how they solved most "human nature" problems at Keller. Sort of like an oriental martial art; you yield, roll with the blow so that your attacker takes a pratfall with the force of the aggression. You do that until the attacker sees that the initial push

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

wasn't worth the effort, that it was a pretty silly thing to do when no one was resisting you. Pretty soon he's not Tarzan of the Apes, but Charlie Chaplin. And he's laughing.

So it wasn't Pink and her lovely body and my realization that she could never be all mine to lock away in my cave and defend with a gnawed-off thighbone. If I'd persisted in that frame of mine, she would have found me about as attractive as an Amazonian leech, and that was a great incentive to confound the behaviorists and overcome it.

So I was back to those people who had visited and left, and what did they see that I didn't see?

Well, there was something pretty glaring. I was not part of the organism, no matter how nice the organism was to me. I had no hopes of ever becoming a part, either. Pink had said it in the first week. She felt it herself, to a lesser degree. She could not ***. That fact was not going to drive her away from Keller; she had told me that many times in shorthand and confirmed it in body-talk. If I left, it would be without her.

Trying to stand outside and look at it, I felt pretty miserable. What was I trying to *do*, anyway? Was my goal in life *really* to become a part of a blind-deaf commune? I was feeling so low by that time that I actually thought of that as denigrating, in the face of all the evidence to the contrary. I should be out in the real world where the real people lived, not these freakish cripples.

I backed off from that thought very quickly. I was not *totally* out of my mind, just on the lunatic edges. These people were the best friends I'd ever had, maybe the only ones. That I was confused enough to think that even for a second worried me more than anything else. It's possible that it's what pushed me finally into a decision. I saw a future of growing disillusion and unfulfilled hopes. Unless I was willing to put out my eyes and ears, I would always be on the outside. *I* would be the blind and deaf one. I would be the freak. I didn't want to be a freak.

They knew I had decided to leave before I did. My last few days turned into a long good-by with a loving farewell implicit in every word touched to me. I was not really sad, and neither were they. It was nice, like everything they did. They said good-by with just the right mix of wistfulness and life-must-go-on, and hope-to-touch-you-again.

Awareness of Touch scratched on the edges of my mind. It was not bad, just as Pink had said. In a year or two I could have mastered it.

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

But I was set now. I was back in my life-groove that I had followed for so long. Why is it that once having decided what I must do, I'm afraid to re-examine my decision? Maybe because the original decision cost me so much that I didn't want to go through it again.

I left quietly in the night for the highway and California. They were out in the fields, standing in that circle again. Their fingertips were farther apart than ever before. The dogs and children hung around the edges like beggars at a banquet. It was hard to tell which looked more hungry and puzzled.

The experiences at Keller did not fail to leave their mark on me. I was unable to live as I had before. For a while I thought I could not live at all, but I did. I was too used to living to take the decisive step of ending my life. I would wait. Life had brought one pleasant thing to me; maybe it would bring another.

I became a writer. I found I now had a better gift for communicating then I had before. Or maybe I had it now for the first time. At any rate, my writing came together and I sold. I wrote what I wanted to write and was not afraid of going hungry. I took things as they came.

I weathered the nondepression of '97, when unemployment reached twenty percent and the government once more ignored it as a temporary downturn. It eventually upturned, leaving the jobless rate slightly higher than it had been the time before and the time before that. Another million useless persons had been created with nothing better to do than shamble through the streets looking for beatings in progress, car smash-ups, heart attacks, murders, shootouts, arson, bombings, and riots: the endlessly inventive street theater. It never got dull.

I didn't become rich, but I was usually comfortable. That is a social disease, the symptom of which is the ability to ignore it while your society develops weeping pustules and has its brains eaten out by radioactive maggots. I had a nice apartment in Marin County, out of sight of the machine-tun turrets. I had a car, at a time when they were begining to be luxuries.

I had concluded that my life was not destined to be all I would like it to be. We all make some sort of compromise, I reasoned; and if you set your expectations too high, you are doomed to disappointment. It did occur to me that I was settling for something far to the downwind side of "high," but I didn't know what to do about it. I made it with a mixture of cynicism and optimism that seemed about the right mix for me. I kept my motor running, anyway.

I even made it to Japan, as I had

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

intended in the first place.

I didn't find someone to share my life. There was only Pink for that, Pink and all her family, and we were separated by a gulf I didn't dare cross. I didn't even dare think about her too much. It would have been very dangerous to my equilibrium. I lived with it and told myself that it was the way I was. Lonely.

The years rolled on like a caterpillar tractor at Dachau, up to the penultimate day of the millennium.

San Francisco was having a big bash to celebrate the year 2000. Who gives a shit that the city is slowly falling apart, that civilization is disintegrating into hysteria? Let's have a party!

I stood on the Golden Gate Dam on the last day of 1999. The sun was setting in the Pacific, on Japan, which had turned out to be more of the same but squared and cubed with neo-samurai. Behind me, the first bombshells of a fireworks celebration of holocaust tricked up to look like festivity competed with the flare of burning buildings as the social and economic basket-cases celebrated the occasion in their own way. The city quivered under the weight of misery, anxious to slide off along the fracture lines of some subcortical San Andreas Fault. Orbiting atomic bombs twinkled in my mind, up there somewhere, ready to plant mushrooms when we'd exhausted all the other possibilities.

I thought of Pink.

I found myself speeding through the Nevada desert, sweating, gripping the steering wheel. I was crying aloud but without sound, as I had learned to do at Keller.

Can you go back?

I slammed the citicar over the potholes in the dirt road. The car was falling apart. It was not built for this kind of travel. The sky was getting light in the east. It was the dawn of a new millennium. I stepped harder on the gas pedal and the car bucked savagely. I didn't care. I was not driving back down this road, not ever. One way or another, I was here to stay.

I reached the wall and sobbed my relief. The last hundred miles had been a nightmare of wondering if it had been a dream. I touched the cold reality of the wall and it calmed me. Light snow had drifted over everything, gray in the early dawn.

I saw them in the distance. All of them, out in the field where I had left them. No, I was wrong. It was only the children. Why had it seemed like so many at first?

Pink was there. I knew her immediately, though I had never seen her in winter clothes. She was taller, filled out. She would be

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

nineteen years old. There was a small child playing in the snow at her feet, and she cradled an infant in her arms. I went to her and talked to her hand.

She turned to me, her face radiant with welcome, her eyes staring in a way I had never seen. Her hands flitted over me and her eyes did not move.

"I touch you, I welcome you," her hands said. "I wish you could have been here just a few minutes ago. Why did you go away, darling? Why did you stay away so long?" Her eyes were stones in her head. She was blind. She was deaf.

All the children were. No, Pink's child sitting at my feet looked up at me with a smile.

"Where is everybody?" I asked when I got my breath. "Scar? Baldy? Green-eyes? And what's happened? What's happened to you?" I was tottering on the edge of a heart attack or nervous collapse or something. My reality felt in danger of dissolving.

"They've gone," she said. The word eluded me, but the context put it with the *Marie Celeste* and Roanoke, Virginia. It was complex, the way she used the word *gone.* It was like something she had said before: unattainable, a source of frustration like the one that had sent me running from Keller. But now her word told of something that was not hers as yet, but was within her grasp. There was no sadness in it.

"Gone?"

"Yes. I don't know where. They're happy. They ***ed. It was glorious. We could only touch a part of it."

I felt my heart hammering to the sound of the last train pulling away from the station. My feet were pounding along the ties as it faded into the fog. Where are the brigadoons of yesterday? I've never yet heard of a fairy tale where you can go back to the land of enchantment. You wake up, you find that your chance is gone. You threw it away. *Fool!* You only get one chance, that's the moral, isn't it?

Pink's hands laughed along my face.

"Hold this part-of-me-who-speaks-mouth-to-nipple," she said and handed me her infant daughter. "I will give you a gift."

She reached up and lightly touched my ears with her cold fingers. The sound of the wind was shut out, and when her hands came away it never came back. She touched my eyes, shut out all the light, and I saw no more.

We live in the lovely quiet and dark.

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

The hundred-year spell was over, and something large and unpleasant was preparing to spill blood at the old Junn Tavern on Lonesome Mountain Road . . .

Hundred Years Gone

by MANLY WADE WELLMAN

Whoever named it Lonesome Mountain Road knew what he was doing. It was a double-rutted way up the flank of what's surely a lonesome mountain, hanging like a snake on a rock, with a high, tree-shaggy cliff on one side and a deep, tree-shaggy drop the other. The sun went down and rain began. He didn't feel good, but he was making something his business on Lonesome Mountain Road, and up he climbed.

The rain made the way slippery. He half groped upward in that wet gloom that went full dark, looking for shelter, not finding it. Now he was really sick in the rain and the dark. His feet staggered and his knees bucked, and nowhere to wheel under cover. He was almost given out when he saw a twinkle of yellow light and headed off the road into a weedy yard and dropped on a stone doorsill. Maybe he tried to call out. The door opened, a woman said something. Then he went past hearing, feeling and thinking.

His wits returned timidly, as if not sure of the way. He opened his eyes and saw sunlight through a window next to where he lay on a couch with a quilt over him. The prettiest girl he'd seen in hundreds of miles was washing his face with a wet cloth.

"Good morning," he managed a faint rattle.

"It's afternoon," she set him right. "You've lain sixteen hours without turning over."

He tried to rise on his elbow, but everything blurred and swam.

"Easy," she said. She had lots of rosy-blonde hair and big green eyes, and a soft point to her chin. "You've got a high fever. Here comes Aunt Royal, she'll give you some medicine."

Aunt Royal was plump, with a bright apron and a tumble of gray hair. Her glasses twinkled. She

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

hiked up his head and held a cup to his lips. "Drink it all," she ordered, and he did, though it tasted sharp and musty all the way down. The girl brought a bowl and a spoon and fed him soup. That tasted better. Things began to clear.

"My name's Hal Stryker," he said, more strongly.

She spooned him soup. "How did you happen to come here in that storm?"

"Well," Hal Stryker tried to think how to say it. "I've been roaming this country. I'm only twenty-three, don't have any family, any debts. I got interested in folklore in college. I was on my way through when I took sick."

She smiled at him, lovely eyed. "My name's Nola Junn."

"Junn," he repeated. So the storm had washed him right up on the doorstep of the place he'd been looking for. "I've heard that name."

"Rest now. Don't talk any more."

He drifted into a dream, he wasn't sure what, only a voice calling his name, *Hal, Hal.* When he awoke again, it was next morning.

Aunt Royal gave him more musty medicine. She said it was stewed out of wild plants. Nola brought him toast and soft-boiled eggs. He sat up against the pillows to say the best thanks he could, and both ladies said he was welcome. Then he asked just where he was.

"Nowhere much," said Aunt Royal. "Lonesome Mountain Road used to be busy a hundred years back, with coaches and wagons and stock herds coming through. This place was a tavern — Junn Station. Thousands of cattle would stop, and there'd be corn for the thousands and supper and bed for the drovers. But things changed. The railroad came through down there in the valley; and after the railroad, the highway for trucks and cars. Not many folks come here these days. We're sort of glad to see you."

"If things are gone somewhere else, why do you live here?" he asked.

"This place belongs to us." Aunt Royal had a nice smile; when she was young she might have been halfway as pretty as Nola was now. "We're used to it. We've a cow and some chickens and a pig and a garden, and money for what else we need. But it's hard to remember that once this place was full of guests, night after night."

Hal looked round the room. It was a big tall one, finished inside with old planks sawed out of different big trees. On the broad-boarded floor lay rag rugs. There were a table and some chairs, shelves with dishes, and a fireplace at the far end. A steep stairway went up to another floor, where probably the ladies slept.

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

"I told Nola I'd heard the name of this place," he said.

"Yes, she said you look for strange old tales, and you needn't be bashful about this one," said Aunt Royal. "It's been told to and fro, I think it's been in the papers." She smiled and folded her hands in her lap. "Maddock Junn was landlord here. He got prosperous with the herds and wagons and coaches. But I reckon he wanted more than just honest money. He began killing lone travelers. Took their money and sold their horses somewhere else."

He creased his face, and Aunt Royal laughed gently.

"That was long ago, Hal. We're not descended directly from Maddock Junn. I don't take him personally. He did those things until one day a traveler, a brave man, was able to shoot him down, then rode away and called the neighbors to see what had happened. They found graves all down-slope behind here, and they likewise found a considerable treasure of money from those robberies."

"That's quite a story," was all he could remark.

"And that's all there is to it," said Aunt Royal.

He pondered a moment. Then: "Folks have said, from time to time, that there were sort of ghostly happenings."

"The souls of his victims?" Aunt Royal smiled again. "Not able to rest easy? Haunting here? But all the bodies were taken out of those graves and buried at Wolf Laurel Church. No, Hal, I can swear that not a single ghost of a single victim haunts us here. Do you believe me?"

"I believe you," he replied, and he did. "There's another thing I wondered." He thought how to say it. "What church did Maddock Junn go to? Or did he go to any?"

She shook her gray head. "Running his tavern here, that kept him double busy on Sundays, I reckon."

Watching her, he tried something else. "Could he have held some religious service of his own?"

She cocked her head a moment before answering. "Now that you speak of it, might could be he did. But people quit coming here after he was finished, even before Lonesome Mountain Road went out of use."

Hal sat up, the quilt round him. "You and Nola live here."

"It's our home," she said gently. "We're used to it."

He touched his stubbly face. "I ought to shave and put on some clothes. I have clean things in my pack there."

Aunt Royal got up. "I'm going out to pick us a mess of snap beans for dinner."

Nola was already out of the house, and when Aunt Royal left,

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

Hal got up, took khaki pants and a checked shirt out of his bundle, and carried soap and razor to look for a bathroom.

At the rear of the big room, an open door led to other doors. Hal looked into a big kitchen with a wood stove, then a room with a tin tub and a bowl and pitcher and mirror. Beyond and between these, at the end of a little hall, he saw a third door, made of heavy oak planks and fastened with a big brass padlock. He wobbled a bit in front of the mirror, but managed to shave and thought he didn't look too bad, maybe a little peaked and shiny-eyed. When he came out, he looked again at the padlocked door. A cross was chiseled deep into the wood. Hal asked himself if the Junns were church-going people after all.

The ladies came in and scolded him for getting up, but smiled at the same time. Nola poured coffee for the three of them.

"Our pickup truck won't start after that rain," she said. "It's been limping for days, anyway. I'll have to walk down to the crossroads, pick up our mail, get somebody here to fix the motor."

"Let me have a look," said Hal, and in spite of their protests he went out to where the dented old pickup stood. He lifted the hood, came back and asked for the ignition key, then went out and tinkered with screw driver and pliers until the truck started. Nola and Aunt Royal stood at the door and clapped as if he'd sung a beautiful song.

Nola drove away. Hal sat on the big stone step, catching his breath, for he still felt shaky. Aunt Royal fetched him more coffee.

"You more than paid your welcome by starting that truck," she said. "It's near about seven miles to the nearest house, and farther to the store."

"You really like staying out here in the woods?" he asked again.

"You might could say we stay to look after things." She wiped her glasses on her apron. "But it's good having your company. I still don't understand why you tried Lonesome Mountain Road in that storm."

"Call it eccentricity," he said, sipping. "Being interested in folklore, I heard something about this place — Junn Tavern — and hitched rides here to see what the something might be. Folks seemed to want to put me off."

"How?"

"Said it was just a made-up tale, and why didn't I go down the river to look at Paint Rock? Maybe that made me come; anyway, they didn't want me to poke into it."

"I've told you about Junn Tavern, Hal. Meanwhile, I'm glad you feel better."

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

That sounded like changing the subject, but Hal stayed with it.

"You're right about the story being known," he said. "There's mention of it in a couple of books of regional history, and I think a folklore magazine. It reminds me of different old penny dreadfuls based on fact — the Sawney Bean one, and a Bulwer-Lytton story, and one or two German things."

"Maybe those old curses and hauntings happened in England or Germany, but how can you get action on them here in America?" Aunt Royal turned toward the rear yard. "I'm going to feed the chickens."

He ambled with her to the chicken run, then to the sty where she poured slop for the cheerful pig. There was a woodpile. Hal took an ax and split some kindling. The exercise made him feel better. The grassy back yard ran past the outbuildings and in among trees, almost to where the ground fell away down, down to where he saw the river sparkle. Aunt Royal went to the ancient log barn where the cow stayed and started to fork hay down from a rack above.

"I'm tall, I'll do that," Hal said, and did it for her. Part of the barn, he saw, was walled off for what might have been a storeroom. Through the open door he saw a rusty old iron cot.

"Let me ask another favor," he ventured. "Let me sleep in here a couple of days until I feel right for the road again. I'll work round the place to pay for it."

Aunt Royal's glasses looked him up and down. "Why not, Hal? But you've heard all of the Junn legend I can tell you."

As they left the barn, Hal had a good look at the back of the house.

It was broad and lofty, of big ancient logs, with a roof of weathered shakes. Two dormer windows showed for the upstairs rooms. At the back, a lean-to had been tacked on, of peeled poles with whitewashed clay chinking. It had a window, no more than a foot square, under the jut of the shed roof. In that window were set two stout sticks across each other. Inside them hung a curtain of sacking. Aunt Royal saw him look.

"That's our supply room," she said. "Come back to the front of the house."

He went with her, thinking of those two barlike sticks crossed in the window. It reminded him of the chiseled cross in the padlocked door inside the little hall. If it was just a supply shed, they kept it well closed up, and crosses on door and window like charms.

Nola drove into the yard. She said the pickup ran like a ninety-dollar clock. She gave Aunt Royal some letters, and Aunt Royal took a check out of one. Hal helped Nola

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

carry in bags of groceries.

"I mentioned you to the postmaster," she smiled at him. "He says he'll put you onto some folklore down the road. An old burying ground where they dug graves for bushwhackers during the Yankee war, and folks say their ghosts come out at night. You could go see about that."

"Hal's going to stay a few days," said Aunt Royal, as if she'd suddenly made up her mind. "He still needs looking after."

Nola's smile went thin. "Yes," she said. "We'll be sorry to see him go."

That wasn't what she sounded sorry about. Hal felt dashed, because he'd begun to hope Nola liked him. Noon dinner was green beans stewed with little new potatoes and onions and chunks of bacon. Hal helped Aunt Royal with the dishes and then he carried his blanket roll and shoulder bag out to the room in the barn. He made up his bed on the old cot and laid his two or three books on top of it. Aunt Royal fetched him a battered tin basin and a pail for water. He set up a box on end for a washstand.

"I'm driving out on an errand," said Aunt Royal. "Be back at supper time."

When she left, Hal lay down for a nap. It was homelike, with a hay smell in the air. Along past midafternoon, he woke up from a dream that Nola liked him after all.

The sleep seemed to have cured his fever, that and perhaps Aunt Royal's herbs. He decided to go find out if that dream about Nola was true.

She was pulling weeds in the onion bed. Hal went to help her. She smiled, and he decided to tell her what he knew about that place, so lonesome on Lonesome Mountain Road.

"Your Aunt Royal told me about Maddock Junn," he said. "What he was doing, and how somebody was too tough for him at last."

She eased out a weed. "Did she mention that today just so happens to be a hundred years from the night of his death?"

"Then I'm here at a coincidence, so to speak." He smiled, but this time no smile came back from her.

"When you came, we wondered —" She broke off. "Of course, that was two nights ago. And you say you study things like these."

"A hundred years." He tried to keep it light. "Like Prince Charming, only no Sleeping Beauty here, just wide-awake you. And you wonder if your old cousin Maddock is really sleeping."

She stared. "Why did you say that?"

"The crosses. One on the inside

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

door, one on the window. Do you think they'll really keep him in?"

"They're supposed to." She swallowed hard. "I've read —"

"*Dracula,*" he guessed. "*Ingoldsby Legends.* But those are about things in the Old World, where the cross has been powerful. Here in America — in the early days of Plymouth Colony, Governor John Endicott cut the cross out of the English flag. Most church-goers don't have crucifixes or hold faith in them. A cross might not stop evil here, might not even slow it up for long."

They both straightened up. "Why did you come here?" she asked.

"Maybe because the century was up. Look, we've done lots of weeding here. Come see how I've fixed up my sleeping quarters."

She frowned, but she came along. In the storeroom, with the cow chomping hay in the stall next to it, she picked up one of the books.

"*Myths and Legends of Our Own Land,*" she read the title out loud. "By Charles M. Skinner. Is that what you study?"

"It was written in 1896. I might even write one someday."

"What myths? What did Charles M. Skinner put in his book?"

"Oh, ghosts — he missed those bushwhackers you told me about. Witches. Wizards. Curses, phantom ships, buried treasures."

She clenched the book in her hands. "Why don't you go away, Hal? I don't want anything to happen to you."

He put his arms around her. She kissed him, softly as a flower touching his face. For a moment he held her close.

"That was the wrong thing to do, Nola," he said.

"Wrong?"

"Because now I won't go away. Not till something works out."

She looked at the book again. "Will you let me look at this?"

"Why, sure."

She walked out. Her bright hair trembled. She didn't want to say another thing about what bothered her. Hal started out after her, trying not to seem to follow her. She headed round the corner of the house. He took several steps in that direction. Then he stopped and looked at the high little window in the lean-to shed.

The sun was low down the western sky, and it shone directly there. Again he saw the crossed sticks in the window, and the burlap curtain. It was old, old burlap, hanging in shreds. If he was up there, he could see what was inside the shed.

He walked quickly through the high grass and stopped right up against the wall. The window was above his head. He reached up, hooked his hands on the rough-

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

chopped old sill and chinned himself up to where he could look through, past the poles and the rags of burlap.

If he didn't let go and fall back down on the grass, maybe it was because what he saw froze his fingertips and made them hang on.

The room inside was walled with old, brown, split slabs. No stored goods, no furniture. Just a pallet made up of blankets on a strew of hay in a back corner, and a couple of iron pans on the puncheon floor. And on the pallet, something.

It sprawled as long as a man, and at first glance Hal thought it wore a long brown gown or robe. It had a head, but Hal could only guess at that through the bushy hair that hid everything but its shining eyes. Its arms huddled on its chest until Hal's shadow fell in from where he hung at the window, fell across the floor. Then the arms moved, and they were hairy too; the whole thing was as shaggy as an animal, and the arms were shackled together at the wrists. It stirred. It turned on the pallet.

Hal let go and he was on the ground, running around the house.

"Nola!" he called out.

He rushed in at the front door. She sat on the sofa with the book open, reading by the light of a kerosene lamp on a shelf.

"Your Aunt Royal didn't tell me everything and neither did you," he said. "So start filling me in."

Her green eyes goggled.

"I had a look in at that back window," he said. "I saw him, and I think he saw me, too. Something in there, shaggy hair all over it. It moved. What do you keep locked up in there, with a cross on the inside door and a cross on the outside window? What's been going on these last hundred years, here at Junn Station?"

She dropped the book on the sofa. "If you stirred him up, no saying what will happen. I'd better tell you about it."

"You'd better." He looked down into those wide eyes. "I'm waiting to hear. He died a hundred years ago."

"He never died. He was shot, they thought he was dead. They buried him at Wolf Laurel Church, but he came out of the grave."

"The grave?"

"You see, he — he'd studied witch things."

"Like what?"

Her bright head was low. Her hands wrung together. "I don't like to talk about it."

"You've got to talk about it," Hal insisted. "He killed people for more than just their money. I heard a whisper of that, too. That's why I came. Some kind of ceremonies, some sort of devil worship."

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

"Yes," she said faintly. "Like what's in this book you let me have. He wanted power. He got it. After they buried him, he got out and walked. Attacked people — tore them to pieces."

It was wild, but Hal had expected something like that.

"They tried to kill him again," said Nola. "Tried one way after another —"

"And they couldn't kill him," Hal finished for her.

"No." It was a moan. "Finally they put chains on him and shut him in there, and a witch woman laid a spell on him for a hundred years."

"The hundred years are over now," Hal reminded.

"That's why Aunt Royal went out. Looking for another witch woman — her name's Oraphah Lancaster. Aunt Royal wants another spell, maybe for a hundred years more —"

She got up and spread her hands. "Try to understand, Hal. Somebody's always had to stay and guard over him. Before us, somebody. And now us."

"You're Junns, you feel it's your duty."

"Keeping him from getting out and —" Again she gestured. "I don't know what. Drink blood? Every full moon, Aunt Royal puts blood in there for him. We kill a chicken or a pig."

"Blood," said Hal. "That makes sense. But why did Aunt Royal want to keep me here for this centennial celebration?"

"The way you talked. She was catching at straws. Nothing had worked — none of the things that are supposed to work —"

"She hinted something like that. The difference in how things turn out, in Europe and America."

"Yes, you've studied those things. She hoped you might have some sort of wisdom —" Nola wasn't finishing her sentences.

"In other words," said Hal, with weighty emphasis, "everything had been tried. All the Dracula things. Garlic, wolfsbane."

"They even drove a stake through his heart. He pulled it out and threw it away."

"But you," said Hal, "you thought I'd be in danger and tried to make me go away."

"Yes," Nola wailed. "Yes."

"Maybe your Aunt Royal's right, maybe I can help." He thought a moment. "You say he's been mostly quiet in there, up to now."

"Not always." Her voice went faint, he could barely hear her. "You saw him, you said he moved around. Now and then we hear him stirring against the walls, the door — after the sun sets. Then —"

Then the sun must have been setting and the darkness crawling

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

in. Hal heard a sound of ponderous movement back in there where the padlocked door was. Heavy feet dragged. Next moment, a creaking shove of weight against the door.

Nola's mouth opened as if to scream, but only a quavering sigh came out. Hal took two long steps and looked into the little doorway. Again that surge of power. He saw the padlocked door quiver on its hinges. Back he strode to where Nola sat crumpled.

"He can't get out," she was managing to say. "The cross on the door —"

"I told you, it isn't going to be enough." He caught the lamp from the shelf. "Nola, listen. What can you pick up and carry out of this house?"

"M-my things are all upstairs."

"Then we'll have to leave them. What's down here?"

A crash, as though wood was beginning to splinter.

Nola got up and ran to a sideboard. She pulled open drawers. "This box has money in it. And these papers — important —"

"Carry them outside," Hal ordered her. "Here," and he caught up the book she had dropped. "Hold onto this, too."

"What are you going to —" But she said no more. She ran out at the front door.

Hal carried the lamp back to the inner hall. It was an old cut-glass lamp; it might be worth something as an antique. Another ripping, thrusting heave from the far side of the door, and its planks began to pull apart. Hal stood there. A fresh assault, and once again. The door was beginning to break to pieces.

"I'm waiting," Hal said to whatever was on the other side.

It made reply to him, a sort of muffled bellow, like a beast. The boards cracked and splintered again, pulled apart in their heavy fastenings.

"Come on through, if that's what you want," said Hal. He dragged the lamp chimney clear and turned up the wick. Its strong, pale tag of flame fluttered in the air.

A heaving inside the door, and a sort of strangled gasp, as of great lungs exerted. Something wriggled into sight through a crack in the boards. Fingers, or talons. Hal saw dark clawlike nails, rank hair on the stubby fingers. They scrabbled and clutched. A whole board came away with a rending protest. Something shoved close behind the opening, was looking out. An eye gleamed through a patch of hair and gave back the light of the lamp.

"Try harder," Hal bade the eye.

The creature heard him, understood him, for it snarled. Hal wondered if it did not almost speak. Another tremendous effort against

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

NEW FROM COLUMBIA

THE CREATION OF TOMORROW

FIFTY YEARS OF MAGAZINE SCIENCE FICTION

Paul A. Carter

In this entertaining look at American literature's most amazing stories, Paul Carter surveys the s-f field, illustrating important themes that have dominated the genre by references to leading writers. "Delightful. Its content is wide-ranging; its presentation thorough. . . . I have lived the times and I have found no false note."
Isaac Asimov

$12.95

COLUMBIA UNIVERSITY PRESS

Address for orders: 136 South Broadway, Irvington, New York 10533

the door. It gave way in fragments. He saw what was breaking out. It thrust forth its hair-thicketed head with the burning eyes. A shoulder, as rankly shaggy as though grown with dark grass, came into view.

Hal stepped to close quarters and thrust the naked flame of the lamp right into that tufted face.

The hair blazed up. A mouth gaped and a deafening scream came out. The head pulled back away from sight again.

Hal shoved close to the broken door, holding the lamp through. He saw a leaping, whirling figure, wreathed in flame like a grotesque electrified sign. Pushing his arm into the room beyond, he dashed the lamp down. It burst like a shell upon the floor, and a brighter flame sprang up and spread.

More screams made the air rock and tremble. Hal backed away from the door, just in time to escape flames that came flickering out. Those ancient wooden boards inside must be kindled.

Out he hurried into the twilight. Nola stood there and trembled.

"I've done it," he said. "It will be finished now."

"Finished?"

"We knew that the old things, the Old World things, wouldn't work, but this is the New World. See here."

She held his book in one limp hand, and he took it. In the dusk he leafed through it to page 77.

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

"Here's what Skinner found out about vampires in America, when he traced reports through Rhode Island and upstate New York." Hal read aloud: "'To lay this monster, he must be taken up and burned; at least, his heart must be.'"

A louder scream came pealing from the house. Nola looked in at the open door. Flames danced inside the front room. A curl of thick smoke came drifting to them.

"You're burning down our house!" she cried.

"It's the only way, because he must burn," said Hal, quite calmly. "Those crude crosses weren't going to work. His hundred years were over, he was coming out, and we stopped him. Come with me."

He took her hand and led her around the house. Inside he heard the rushing of flames.

"The barns and pens will be all right," he said as they reached the back yard. "They're too far away to catch fire. The animals will be safe, at least."

He let go her hand and walked to where he could see the window plainly.

Inside was a hot red glow. Then a dark shadow blotted the redness away. He saw two pawlike hands try to jam through the crossbars, with rusty irons on their wrists. Sparks glowed in the hair upon them, smoke rose from them. He backed away toward Nola again.

"He's done for," he reported. "You can put those things you saved in my room in the barn."

"Wait."

She hurried back to the front of the house. The pickup truck rolled into the yard. Aunt Royal scrambled out in the light from the burning windows.

"I couldn't find her," she chattered. "Oraphah Lancaster's gone. Nobody knows where she's gone." Her spectacles gleamed as she looked at flames rolling out at the front door.

"We're on fire!" she screamed.

"I did it," said Hal. "Fire will end him. The house will burn, and he'll burn with it. When his heart is in ashes, he won't trouble anybody again."

Aunt Royal clutched her face with her hands. "Thank God!" she shrilled. "Oh, thank God!"

Flames snapped at the windows like banners.

"Is there somewhere you can go?" Hal asked.

"Any of the neighbors will take us in when they know it's over."

Aunt Royal straightened up and stared at the fire. Nola swayed. Hal caught her and held her close.

"This is why you came, isn't it?" she whispered. "You knew about this, that it had to be done. You knew it all the time, didn't you?"

"All the time," said Hal.

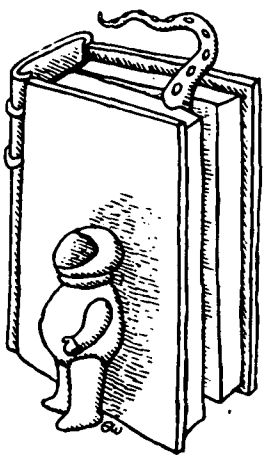
LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

ALGIS BUDRYS

Books

Gateway, by Frederik Pohl, St. Martin's Press, $8.95

The Futurians, by Damon Knight, John Day, $10.95



Like all the other great men in SF, Frederik Pohl is idiosyncratic, essentially self-made, and brilliant. Unlike many of the others, he has an extremely broad range of interests and education. Most autodidacts are people who know a great deal about a few things and intuit the rest as best they can. Pohl, who never completed formal grade school, has demonstrated an ability to discuss, on a professional level, matters ranging from algebra to Zoroastrianism, with specialists in all those various scientific and cultural concerns. His professional career, which began in the later 1930s, has included advertising and promotion, field meteorology for the Army Air Corps, the management of a major SF literary agency, and an ongoing program of lectures to professional futurologists. That is in addition to his career as an SF editor over a forty-year span, as an SF writer of the first rank on his own hook, and as the principal collaborator, in the 1950s, with that other genius, Cyril Kornbluth.

Over all this time, no one has ever been made privy to his motivations, many have been his good companions but few have been his close friends, and his stature in the history of this field has, perhaps as a consequence, never been measured sufficiently large. That may come as a paradoxical statement,

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

considering that *Man Plus* has won him, at last, the Nebula award. But sweet as that may be, Pohl in his various attributes has in fact, over a forty year span, been the major conservator of an SF mode fully as vigorous and healthy as John Campbell's "modern science fiction" ever was, and where is the award sufficient to that accomplishment?

Please don't mistake my meaning. John W. Campbell, Jr., represents the major artistic fact in the history of 20th century SF, and the profundity of his influence may in one way be measured by its effect on various aspects of Frederik Pohl's life and work. Pohl, in turn, represents an as yet unsatisfactorily named mode which would not be as vigorous if it had not cross-pollinated with "modern science fiction," but which owes much of the astonishing degree of its vigor to Pohl, as collaborator, as agent, as editor and as writer. As hinted at in various chapters of *Hell's Cartographers,* in anecdotal sections of *The Early Pohl,* and now in Damon Knight's *The Futurians,* (see further), that mode is by no means Pohl's alone, is even more complex than the various interpretations of "modern science fiction" at the hands of its various "Golden Age" practitioners, and is almost as much in the hands of Donald A. Wollheim and Damon Knight as it is in Fred's. But the only name that mode has at the moment is "anti-Campbellianism," which is pejorative to both sides, creates the inaccurate impression of two sides when they are demonstrably interpenetrative, and is also a bit of a slight to Pohl. Pohl is not ordinarily anti-anything; he is pro-Pohl.

If we were to call that mode "Futurianism," we would be lending too much weight to the post-adolescent years of the young men and the few young women who once banded together under that social name, drawn together by mutually high intelligence, an interest in SF, and the feeling that the world of the Great Depression was wrong. Those are roots, but they are not the trunk or the branch. Though they made the harvest possible, the years in which the Futurians taught each other to write and edit are a long time gone, now. As *The Futurians* makes clear, Pohl was there, and important, but both Kornbluth and he were going their own parallel ways from the beginning; although the young Isaac Asimov was present, the major formative influence on him was Campbell. The matured Frederik Pohl, as the surviving major SF novelist evolved from that early school, clearly embodies Futurian storytelling techniques and, more important, Futurian technical attitudes toward story ideation.

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

How many of them became "Futurian" because the young Pohl made them a part of that corpus can never be clear. What is clear is that the major artistic weakness of Futurian technique was a gimmicky, sometimes mordant, always slightly withdrawn effect which lent itself tellingly to important but flashy work such as *The Space Merchants,* but even at Kornbluth's hands had difficulty coming to grips with the deeper feelings. Perhaps a term we're groping for is "anti-Romanticism."

And now I commend to you *Gateway,* Pohl's latest published novel, a strong contender for this year's awards, a gimmicky, sometimes flashy novel which goes straight to the human heart.

The story, as you know by now from reading other reviews, is set in the supposition that an ancient interstellar race, the Heechee, left in the Solar System one of their old way-stations — a hollow livable asteroid stocked with automatic starships. The Heechee are long vanished, the ships are wearing down and unreliable, and no one understands how they work or dares tinker with them. But it's no trick to find enough desperate people to man the ships and send them out as volunteers. Most go on fruitless journeys to worthless places or into oblivion. But those few who find useful Heechee artifacts at their destinations, and bring them back, become wealthy. At a time when Earth is mining oil shale to convert into protein, most Terrestrials are forever proles, and a few are unassailable fat cats. Prole Robinette Brodhead takes the traditional upward route; he wins a lottery, converts the prize into one-way fare to the Heechee station, and enters that grander lottery.

On the station, he at first finds ways to live without going out, goes finally because his psyche euchres him into it, gets back broke, makes a few more bucks, goes out, finally, on a jackpot trip, but returns only after ditching his beloved in such a way that he feels justified in considering himself a murderer. The story is told in flashback sessions with a psychiatric computer. Pohl's technique in telling the story is to intersperse baseline narrative with clippings from the station newspaper, credit invoices, flashback, and other forms of broadsiding.

Now, look at that story line in terms of the Futurian style of SF ideation. It is the pure quill. The writing technique, being non linear, is not — Futurians liked to thump you with a cartoon beginning, tell a straight story spotted with wry observations, and hit you with a twist ending. Not until the 1950s did Cyril Kornbluth begin making it a rule to end in the withdrawing, omniscient auctorial com-

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

ment to be found ending such stories as "The Luckiest Man in Denv." Or, not ending — terminating... a technique that can be seen again in Pohl's "Happy Birthday, Dear Jesus," et seq. *Gateway* represents two departures from the Futurian style, even the evolved Postwar ex-Futurian style. One is that general collage-y technique, like a restrained version of Joe Haldeman's *Mindbridge,* whose roots are much elsewhere. But the other is that, in the ending, Brodhead weeps.

Now, people at the endings of many Futurian stories weep. Or they stand aghast, or scream, or drop their jaws. They are cartoons. Not Brodhead. Pohl would not be true to his past if Brodhead were a full figure; he is still not a personality but an archetype — a prole. But he is a lost prole. His enemy is not the fat cat; his troubles are not those of the innocent victim within too large a mechanism. He is, in a sense, not a victim at all. He is large enough a person within himself so that he has the capacity to inflict pain on himself, and to recognize whence it comes. He weeps real tears. From the author of "Let the Ants Try," *Gladiator-at-Law* and *Slave Ship,* this is more than unexpected.

I think *Gateway* is more than an excellent piece of SF. I think it is a sign that the Futurian/Campbellian dichotomy is at an end just as we begin to grasp the extent of its existence.

Where does SF come from? SF writers are a special breed, as anyone can testify who has been around many of the other kinds of fiction and non-fiction writers. There exists in fact a twenty-year-old psychosociological study, embodying an extensive survey of writers, which establishes a differentiation of SF writers from all other kinds, and which attempts to chart specific personality points that might account for that general difference. All this really does is lend some academic validation to what any aging editor can tell you from intuition, and it is not much more helpful beyond that. But in surveying established SF writers of the '50s, it speaks necessarily of people who were finding their feet in the '40s.

And living incredible lives. For proof, the very best source is no quantified research paper but Damon Knight's superb new informal compendium of oral history, gossip and historical research, *The Futurians.*

The Futurians — never homogeneous, never at rest with each other, sometimes united by common ideals or common enemies — some of them internal, all of them tending to transience — were a group of SF fans living in the cheap

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

sections of New York City during the late '30s and the 1940s. Many of them, like Frederik Pohl, swiftly made the transition into professional SF writing and editing, always contending and scrambling in competition with John Campbell's prestige. Others, like David Kyle, founded publishing ventures or otherwise exerted an influence well beyond their public fame as individuals. One, Isaac Asimov, could never fully yield his own native precepts to any in-group world-view, and in any case went his own way as a Campbellian writer. Some, like the tragic John Michel, were important not for their products but for their personalities. Michel's status in the eyes of ex-Futurians like James Blish, Cyril Kornbluth, Damon Knight and Pohl was still clearly visible in the early 1950s. (It was even loftier, or significantly lowlier, take your pick, in the eyes of people who had been peripheral to the Futurians and represented a second and third ripple in the effect of the Futurian phenomenon. These collateral personalities, of whom I am one, total a very large number of people who do SF in ways that would have been different if there had been no Futurians.)

From the Futurians came Donald A. Wollheim, Larry Shaw, and Robert A. W. Lowndes, who throughout their subsequent careers have frequently demonstrated how well they learned to edit rickety SF media on laughable budgets. Other Futurians were Judith Merril, writer and professional newsman Richard Wilson, and Virginia Kidd, once Blish's wife and collaborator on sports pulps as well as more serious work, now an SF literary agent. There were individuals like Jack Gillespie, who were fun to be around, and like Walter Kubilius. (Kubilius, who proved true to his reputation as an extremely likeable man when I finally met him, published a number of stories in the early 1940s which I not only enjoyed but treasured because they proved a simple Lithuanian boy could make it in SF. I made the mistake of asking my father, the Consul General, if he knew this marvelously talented man who could not only sell to *Astonishing* but was alleged, in a biographical note, to also edit a Lithuanian/American newspaper. "Yes, I know him," said my father, who had a reputation as a likeable man, "and I want you to never go near that science fiction again.")

There's a great difficulty in starting on the Futurians, which is that almost all of them were personalities who created dramatic impressions on the world of SF, and contact with them generates reminiscence and collateralizing *ad libitum*. They were — and the survivors are — street people before

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

there was a name for that. So they made a name for themselves.

Does Knight give the Futurians a fair shake, considering that he was one of them?

I think so. I can't pretend to his knowledgeability on his own topic, but it all comports very closely with as much as I've heard casually over the years from many of the people involved. There's an incident involving me, and that's accurate.

My notes reflect one minor, one semi-important, and one major error, over some 250 pages of text.*

In ascending order:

From the context itself, it was Theodore's body, not his chassis, that was changed in Indiana;

Wollheim's book for Viking is *The Portable Novels of Science,* and this avoidance of the term "science fiction" is germane to the point Knight is making at the time;

Blish had *two* cancer operations in the US, the second one devastating. It as good as killed him. Judy Lawrence nursed him with boundless dedication. Although Jim then stayed with Hill & Knowlton, on the Tobacco Institute project for a little while, he had obviously gone through the preponderant event of his existence. He shortly pulled up stakes and left for England to do the work he did on the final plateau of his *tour de force* of a life.

Also, I wish a little more had been made of the fact that for those who came to puberty in the Depression, radical economic solutions, whether Stalinist or Trotskyite, or any permutation of Socialism, were much more promising practicalities than they would appear to be today, even to those as intelligent then as these people were, and are.

Other than that, I don't see what crucial factor in Futurian history Knight has overlooked, nor do I see how any real understanding of SF history is possible without this book. Knight is not your friendliest or most discreet reporter, but he has always known what reporting absolutely needs to be done. This book validates the importance of an entire school of thought in SF, which remained vigorous and viable even while many believed the only SF was in *Astounding,* and which is still only at the peak of its flowering, even granting that Pohl as a novelist is now its only surviving creator of extensive fiction. It also provides a hitherto unemphasized link between the Futurian view — with its scattergun idealism and tumultuous social conscience, to say nothing of its unavoidable callowness — and the Milford SF writers' mystique, and the Clarion SF Writers' Workshop which evolved from *that.*

There are also photographs and facsimile fanzine pages, some songs, and a good index.

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

To talk for a little while about that latter development, we are going to find me getting a little personal, I hope to good purpose.

I became an SF professional on the heels of the Futurian movement. Futurians comprised many of my friends, my preceptors, occasionally my antagonists. One of the major discontinuities between us was the fact that they, unlike I, had been just old enough to serve in the War. But there was an inkling of a perhaps more fundamental distinction, suppress it though we tried. What we didn't fully grasp was that I was one of the first robins of a permanent change in where SF writers come from.

I was post-Depression, barely, born in 1931. Although the economic status of my family fluctuated toward genteel poverty as time and events advanced toward the 1950s, I was solidly upper middle class in my pre-adolescence. I actually participated in a "story workshop" at the University of Miami in 1947, getting booted out when I entered a story with an action plot. Then I went for a BS in Writing at Columbia University in 1950, which involved a few lecture-format classes with people like Louis Paul, who was selling a little to *Colliers*, with a New York Daily News rewrite man who gave me an inkling of journalistic style, and with William Kunstler, of all people, who at the time was selling short stories to the *Atlantic Monthly* and augmenting his slight income from a law firm that specialized in matters of literary property. At Columbia, I wrote most of the stories I would sell in early 1952, so I can't say I didn't learn anything. But Kunstler wanted me to write humor, and Paul wanted me to write happy; the *News* fellow is the only one who functioned as anything more than a catalyst, and in gratitude I have never been able to remember his name.

When I began selling, I was therefore, like Bob Sheckley, Michael Shaara, and a few other fresh faces, the first of a new breed — college boys who had specifically intended to be writers, and writers of SF, at that. And while I have no doubt the courses had some beneficial effect, we as undergraduates had in fact had to force a perversion on a Creative Arts curriculum whose essential purpose was to produce interesting prose for literary quarterlies. It was going to be well over a decade before anyone offered a respected campus course specifically on SF writing. Sheckley, Shaara and I may have had educational backgrounds quite different from those of, say, Pohl, Kornbluth or Merril, but there were many, many essential similarities — which we cultivated as soon as we began to socialize with those fellows —

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

and there was, really, not even that much functional separation between us, the Futurians, and the slightly older people who learned to sell to the pulps while working as section hands or carrying a slide rule for Philco.

In effect, we were all contemporaries. Some of the older heads got a little hoity-toity with us youngsters at times, and at times we deserved it, but in general we tried deliberately to be one homogeneous community in which the prevailing tone was set by those who had found that poverty was the best incentive and trial-and-error the method of choice.

Not until ex-Futurians Knight, Merril and Blish established the Milford Writers Conference in the middle 1950s was there any serious attempt to teach SF writing on any other basis to a group of students. The only previous tutorial methods had been one-on-one approximations of the master/apprentice system,* and Milford advanced beyond them to the extent of putting twenty or thirty people in one room for one week and letting them tutor each other. For that to work well, all the participants except possibly one or two selected promising amateurs must be people who have been around in the marketplace for a while. It is something to hear Kornbluth talking shop with Knight and Sturgeon.

It worked superbly, if what you want is to put all the dice in one cup and shake hell out of them. Along with such side-effects as feedback highs, smooching in the kitchen, and making up new verses to what is *not* the official song of the U.S. Army Quartermaster Corps, the early-model Milford Conference produced sharp alterations in several careers, a general revelation that there might be other frames of SF reference and, on balance, more good than harm.

Then years later, Milford alumnus Robin Scott Wilson began the Clarion SF Writers' Workshop for promising amateurs, as a summer course at a small college in Pennsylvania. Subsequently moving to Purdue, the Workshop has now been situated for the past eight years at Michigan State University under the directorship of Professor R. Glenn Wright, who is also deeply interested in the thoroughgoingly academic Science Fiction Research Association.

Clarion crossfeeds with the evolved Milford annual conference. Damon Knight and his wife, novelist Kate Wilhelm, are always two of the six visiting writers; Wilson is

For about ten months beginning in the Fall of 1952, I lived in Lester del Rey's cold water flat, learned to work a kerosene space-heater, fed cats, and listened.

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

the third, and three other people each serve one-week stints. The writers — 25 of them, usually in their late teens or early twenties, selected from a hundred applicants submitting stories — live through the six weeks in close quarters, workshopping each morning, writing furiously each afternoon and evening. Clarion was the essential threshold; SF now conducts its own seminaries.

By no means every new SF writer is a Clarion graduate. But nearly every new SF writer has had some analogous experience of academic instruction in SF for college credit. This is now the main route, and the writer who appears on our scene without that experience is a remarkable rarity.

Is that good? I don't know. Not all us old section-hands like the idea. I taught a week at Clarion this summer, and am teaching a four semester-hour workshop at Chicago's Columbia College this winter. I went to Clarion as dubiously as Fred Pohl did in his time, and God knows what I expected. I remember Lester, in the flat down by the West Side docks, and scrounging discarded Christmas trees to burn in the fireplace. I remember a frankfurter being cut up to make soup for three, and I remember that Lester's preferred instructional statement did not begin with the words "Ladies and gentlemen...."

Of course, I could just as easily remember William Kunstler in full impassioned declaration about the duty of the artist to society.

I liked teaching at Clarion. I will never forget those people, and I think there's a fair chance you'll find them among the regular writers of SF, and in other genres, in the measurable future. I was struck by the fact that, at the end of six weeks of total immersion, Clarion makes the seminary metaphor seem very apt. Still and all, James Jones wrote *From Here to Eternity* at a workshop held in a trailer park. The directors made everyone drink warm Jell-O every day and take regular supervised trips to a designated whorehouse.

So you never know what's insane, and even if it's insane, it may be what works. In any event, look how far we have come.

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

A neatly compressed story about astronaut Daniel Cranch, his mission, his family . . .

The Family Man

by TED THOMAS

The first shadow appeared on the screen. Daniel Cranch leaned closer to be sure it was real. Then he touched the button that put him on manual and sat back with the controls in his hands. He checked the time. It would be eight minutes before Houston said to him, "Ah, *Siderite,* we see you have gone to manual before schedule. Explain reason, please."

Well, he had eight minutes of peace and then another eight minutes before they could object to whatever he decided to tell them. In fact, they could no longer press him very hard. Even more than the distance, the cloud of ionized gases around him made it even more difficult to communicate with Houston, and his Earthbound teammates were just going to have to leave it up to him. Cranch settled back, palms dry, breathing even and shallow, more relaxed than he had been in a long time.

The shadow on the screen took on more substance, and it was larger than they had supposed. The nucleus of the comet must be one hundred and fifty kilometers in diameter. Unless he was getting a false reading, it must be about two hundred kilometers ahead of him, looming and quivering in the cloud of dust, sand, gravel, rock, and glowing gas through which he rode. Now that he was actually in the comet's tail, all of his instrument readings had to be treated with suspicion. But he had been right about one thing: he could hear through the insulated hull the thuds and the clunks as he worked his way through the cloud of debris at a relative velocity of about fifty kilometers per hour. He leaned to a porthole to see, and it was easy to resolve pieces the size of his fist as they went by. He bared his teeth. Those chunks, if they hit the Earth's atmosphere, would slash

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

into it at some ten kilometers per second. All except the large ones would flare off into bright gases in a second or two.

He started to lean back, but a dark motion caught the edge of his vision. A dense stream of particles swept by the porthole, swirling, colliding with one another. One of the particles rebounded from several larger ones and lifted out of the main mass, turning slowly. Cranch could see it clearly. It was almost perfectly round, the apparent size of a marble. A vein of reddish material ran through it. It looked exactly like a child's marble.

"I'm off, honey. Jed Harris and I play in the semifinals in an hour, and I know how to beat him: play to his backhand and stay close to the net; I got the word from Gerry. Wish me luck, and I'll be home in good time for dinner."

Margaret was hemming a dress. She looked up and said, "Good luck. Don't be late. We're having..." Their young son came bounding in the front door, waving his arms, panic in his eyes.

"Mom, Dad, I got to play in the marble tournament, and I don't know how to shoot. Dad, will you show me?"

"Sure, Danny. Right after dinner we'll go out and I'll show you..."

"No, Dad. I got to know right now. Mr. Granger gave me the marbles" — he held up a transparent bag of aggies — "so I could play in the tournament this afternoon. You got to show me right now."

"Well, I'd like to, Danny, but I've got this match myself right now. You can enter the next tournament; there'll be another one soon."

Explanations don't reach eight-year-olds, and the tears welled. Margaret looked at Cranch, went over and put her arms around her son, and then looked at Cranch again. For a moment Cranch hesitated; then he put down his racquet bag and said, "Okay, Danny, let's go outside and I'll show you how to shoot right now." Danny smiled as Cranch phoned in his forfeit, and they went outside and practiced together for an hour and a half. Then Danny went off to the tournament and lost all his aggies.

Cranch studied the screen; the nucleus of the comet loomed closer. He narrowed the scanning beam to train it on the edges of the nucleus to determine rotation. He found no signs of rotation, and checked again, and then a third time. "Houston," he said, "the nucleus is not rotating. I repeat, not rotating. I've run three checks and it appears to have no detectable rotation. It's size now measures..." A message

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

started in, and so he stopped transmitting and listened. It was the reply to his manual takeover.

"Ah, *Siderite,* we note manual ahead of schedule. Explanation, please." The transmission sounded scratchy, and it pulsed a bit. Cranch shook his head; communications were worse than predicted. They were wasting time with trivia.

"Houston, I'm in heavy debris. I'm having trouble receiving you, so start redundant transmission. I'm turning on analyzers now so you can get their output."

Cranch looked at his time. He was on schedule, but conditions were worsening. The glow around him had increased, and he could barely see the stars through it. If he had to slow down before he reached the nucleus, he might not have enough time to make it. Fuel was the problem; he needed enough to break out of the comet's orbit and find a safe, Earthbound orbit. Long hours had gone into the planning of the fuel requirements of this mission. By sending one man instead of two, they were able to add extra fuel in place of the second man and his life-support systems. Cranch touched his throttles a bit to add a kilometer per hour to his speed. At least they worried about his fuel.

"Margaret, I asked you to put gas in the car if you drove way over to that shoe discount store. It's empty, and I'm supposed to be at an infrared camera briefing in twenty minutes. Now I've got to get a cab, and I'll be late."

"Oh, I'm sorry, honey. I forgot. I'll take care of it right now." She jumped up and went to the phone to call their garage. Cranch had to wait until she was done before he could call a cab.

The warning horn let go, and Cranch cut in the crash circuits on the computer. Almost instantly the steering jets came on, turned the craft, and accelerated it on a changed course. Cranch then saw the object on the screen; it had been dead ahead. Before the computer control could cut the power to the new course, Cranch did it manually. He brought the craft to its original heading and gritted his teeth. The computer had moved the craft deeper into the cloud. It could just as well have turned the other way and avoided the object by moving outside instead of inside. Computers have no sense. Cranch leaned to the porthole to watch, and when the object went by, it was so close it startled him. It was an iron-gray block the size of an office desk, with rounded edges and corners, and it was streaked with grayish material that looked like dirty ice. It passed him twenty meters away, very slowly turning end for end, and then it was gone.

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

Cranch transmitted a detailed description to Houston. Then he checked his time and fuel, and he saw that the maneuver had cost him dearly; an effective five minutes was lost. He shook his head. A couple more episodes like that, and he'd never make it to the nucleus.

"Ah, *Siderite...*" reception was even worse "...we hear you loud and clear. So it must be your reception. Your transmission is A-okay. Turn on all your analyzers, IR, UV, flame, gas, and gross. We are getting great data. We will report later." The words came to Cranch in short bursts, repeated, and he got it all as far as he could tell. He flipped all the analyzers on, wondering why they were so excited. Some of these analyses were supposed to be saved for the actual nucleus, but now they were using them early. The dusts and gases outside must show something unexpected. Hah. He thought he knew what it was. Exotic molecules, that's what. The stuff seen in interstellar dust and gas by the radio astronomers: methyl cyanide, methyl alcohol, formaldimine, lots of others. If those molecules were outside now, this comet might really be one of the outer, solar-cloud comets, instead of one of the dust-and-ice inner solar-cloud comets. Coming from many thousands of times further out than Pluto, this might be an outer comet that intermingled with the outer comets of Alpha Centaura. Here, right ahead of him, might be the interface of two stars. Cranch began to grow excited. The nucleus filled his screen now, even on small scale. Time, about ten minutes; fuel, about low-normal.

"Ah, *Siderite,* time-fuel ratio below normal. Scrub all plans for extravehicular activity even if you find a place to put down." Cranch got it all, and he glanced ruefully at the EVA suit on the rack, ready to go. He had wanted to know, very badly, what it would be like to stand on the nucleus of a large comet. They had scrubbed EVA, and they had not even consulted him.

"Can I go, Mom?"

"Consult your father, dear. Whatever he says."

Their daughter, Lorraine, came swinging into the room where he was studying. At sixteen she was a rosy-cheeked image of her mother, except that the fine-spun golden hair swept halfway down her back. "Dad, can I go over to Hartford for the weekend? A whole bunch of the kids are going to see that musical version of *Hamlet.* We'll all stay at the Sonesta and we'll be back about noon Sunday. Can I go?"

"No."

"No? Dad, why not? I've got to go. I've got..."

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

"I told you, no more trips until you repaid me for the last one to New York City. You still owe me ninety dollars, and you've only got twenty in your checking account. Where's the money?"

Margaret came in. "Now, Dan. I don't think it's quite fair to hold her to that. Baby-sitting jobs have been scarce."

Cranch said, "Margaret, why did you send her in to ask my permission if you think she should go? Why didn't you just tell her, 'yes'?"

"I didn't think you were going to forbid her."

Lorraine assumed her hurt and haughty posture. "It's all right, Mom. I did not know the money meant so much to him. Please put seventy dollars in my checking account so I can pay him. That should take care of it." She went swinging out the door, her long hair flying.

There was no forward porthole in the ship, only the two on the sides. Radar showed a distance of four kilometers to the nucleus. So Cranch pressed his face against the side port and tried to look ahead. The glowing fog formed a huge tunnel around him, and the glow made it hard to see. Then, slowly, he realized that the great, looming background was an object, and not the mere dimming of light with distance. He said, "Houston, I have visual contact with the nucleus. It is big, fills all forward horizons. I see no irregularities. Preparing to fire retro rockets." He switched on the contact computer and sat back to monitor its actions.

He felt the surge press him forward against the restraining straps.

"Ah, *Siderite,* this will be the last transmission before you touch down. ETA four minutes. We confirm no time for EVA. You barely have time for touchdown. Now hear this. Make every effort to touch down and pick up raw sample from the surface unless you run out of time. You will have about one minute on surface before liftoff. All your transmissions are coming in loud and clear. Maintain voice description. Good luck, Dan."

Cranch did not even notice that for the first time during the mission they had used his name. The forward straps pressed against him, harder now. All analytical systems aboard the craft functioned wide open. TV cameras scanned the entire area ahead of him, recording the images and transmitting at the same time. Eight different camera systems ran hundreds of stills per second up and down the spectrum. Gas analyzers pulled in ambient atmosphere, ran it through columns, and broadcast the results. Ion collectors, assorted dust collectors, particle collectors, pulled in samples, stored some and analyzed

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

some. Magnetometers and gravitometers took measurements. The craft literally hummed from the huge consumption of power as the most advanced analytical tool yet devised by Man came within one hundred meters of the surface of the nucleus of the comet.

Cranch divided his time between the activities of the landing computer and the view outside. He described the surface he saw, emphasizing the grayness of it all, the wrinkled appearance in which a material of lighter gray seemed to fill the wrinkles. Gently rounded, low hillocks hundreds of meters in diameter gave a blistered appearance to the surface over a distance as far as he could see.

The impression he had was as if he were making a landing at dusk on a rolling, gray desert on Earth. The craft tipped and slowed and softly thudded to the surface. Cranch could hear the extension arms reaching out for samples. The one beneath the craft placed the charge and detonated it. The wave sensors placed on the surface awaited the return of the seismic vibrations.

In the cabin the one-minute gong chimed, then the thirty-second gong, and thereafter one note for every second. Cranch ensured all sampling arms were retracted and punched on the takeoff computer. At ten seconds he looked around, glanced back behind him out the porthole for the first time. Thirty meters behind him, on the surface, was a perfectly square depression on the surface, framed in a rim. A raised bar ran across the center of the surface of the square within the rim, and the bar had openings along its length. Openings, like handholes. As the next to the last note of the gong chimed, Cranch hit the "abort" button, and the craft wound down into silence. One at a time, Cranch reactivated the cameras and scanners, directing them to the square. He reported to Houston that he would be transmitting for the next few days and that they should give him details of any tests they wanted run. Then he removed the straps from the EVA suit and began to pull it on, humming happily to himself.

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

Glen Cook was born in 1944 in New York City and moved to Indiana in 1948. He began writing sf in 1967 and published a novel, The Heirs of Babylon, *in 1972. He writes that he is employed by General Motors, "lives in a very old three story house with a wife and five cats and 10,000 books, own a farm I manage on weekends and get very little time to write, though it is a pursuit I love."*

The Seventh Fool

by GLEN COOK

Cantanzaro sang as he walked along the road to Antonisen. Occasionally, he glanced back, smirked. The road remained an empty, meandering scar of brown on springtime's green. The Maniarchs of Kortanek hadn't yet picked up his scent.

Then he frowned. He had been compelled to flee without the Jewels of Regot.

He grinned again. The thousand gayly colored spires of Antonisen pricked the sky ahead. The man who had flummoxed Regot's pragmatist priests could, surely, make his fortune in a city ruled by a Council called The Seven Fools.

Springtime was spreading through Zarlenga like a happy disease. The Hundred Cities were opening like bright flowers. Travelers buzzed among them like bees. His reception at Antonisen's Harlequin Gate wasn't the least unfriendly.

Serendipity! he thought moments after penetrating the dusty streets. He had arrived just in time to witness one of Antonisen's fabled elections. A Fool had retired. Half the men of the city were vying for his Chair.

A clever man should be able to find an avenue to profit in that.

Antoniseners reasoned that, since government was evil but necessary, it ought, at least, to be entertaining. Those who wished to become Councilors, therefore, had to convince the voters that they could provide the most amusing show.

There was a clown on every corner. Antoniseners were partial to humorists. The more inspired were winning votes with scandalous libels on the retired Fool's manhood.

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

Cantanzaro ventured from clown to clown, observing fingers and toes. Theft was the swiftest path to wealth. And in Antonisen it was the custom to flaunt one's fortune in the form of rings.

His natural impulse was to palm a few while shaking hands. But that, he noted, could be tricky business. Antoniseners seemed preternaturally sensitive to such maneuvers. Whenever a foreigner made a try — there were a good many in town for the election — the victim would shriek, a gang would fall on the thief, pummel him senseless, hoist him by the arms and legs, run him to a nearby low, shadowed archway, and chuck him in with a cry of "Hornbostel!"

Whatever it meant, Cantanzaro had no curiosity. He had had his encounters with the mysteries of the Hundred Cities before. Few had been pleasant.

He needed a better idea. And one came.

Cantanzaro seldom lacked for ideas, only for means.

He dug into his tattered purse. Still only four green-tinged copper alten of Kortanek, and one useless map.

So he sought a market with an antiquary. All Zarlenga was deep in the rubbish of its ten-thousand-year history. Every city had its junk men.

This one was typical, an old man whose place of business was a filthy blanket spread in the square, piled high with history's leavings. He probably went home to a palace. Zarlengans were suckers for anything ancient.

"Your wish, Grace?" The old man wrinkled his nose at Cantanzaro's shabbiness, but at election time one was rude to no man. That he himself was grubbier didn't faze the man. Poverty was part of his act too.

"A book."

"Ah. Yes. I've got a dozen. A hundred. Cook books, romances, histories, journals, magic by the right hand, magic by the left...."

"It should be unreadable."

"Unreadable?" A live one, the merchant thought, rubbing his hands together. "Li Chi." He held up a scroll. "Got caught in the rain...."

"No. In a forgotten tongue." Cantanzaro smiled. The old man kept gawking at his ringless fingers.

"This, then. A genuine antiquity, recovered at great personal risk, by a tomb-miner working the Mountains of Dautenhain."

Cantanzaro considered the title. It was in no alphabet he knew. But he found the tomb-miner story doubtful. The tome was in too fine a shape. Stolen, likely. "Good enough." He tossed a copper, started off.

The merchant shrieked like a

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

scalded cat. A dozen men closed in, already arguing over the quickest route to the nearest low black archway. Cantanzaro turned back, pretending bewilderment.

A half hour later he thundered, "But you admit you can't even read the thing!"

"Can't read anything." The old man went on to mourn about being cheated, robbed, losing money on the deal, but settled for Cantanzaro's remaining three alten.

The most desperate candidate, street talk said, was one Ablan Decraehe, son of a retired Fool who claimed the youth was a bad joke on legs.

While waiting to obtain audience with Decraehe, Cantanzaro worked his map into his scheme. It was a crude thing, but would do.

He had a low opinion of the intellect and morals of anyone who *wanted* to get into government. The best system, he thought, was that practiced in Immerlagen, where they seized a man off the street, carried him screaming to his inauguration at the Mayoral Palace. As soon as he showed signs of enjoying his post, the Aldermen had him stuffed and put into the City Museum.

"The book is the rare and famous Tales of Arabrant, of which great humorists have whispered for generations. A man of your stature has doubtless heard of it," Cantanzaro told Decraehe, a slim, snobbish man who affected an unnecessary monocle and would not have been caught dead entertaining a commoner outside election time. "The ultimate collection of humorous tales, some with such magic that men have been known to die laughing on hearing them. I heard you tell a censored version of 'The Bureaucrat's Revenge.'" It was the youth's obvious favorite and most successful story and the brightest spot in his leaden monologue. "I thought you'd be a man interested in the original."

Decraehe frowned suspiciously.

"It's always good to have a friend on the Council when one changes cities. One hand washes the other." He made the motions with slim, uncalloused fingers.

Cantanzaro had chosen his mark well. Decraehe was the sort who could admit no shortcoming, especially ignorance. "I've heard of it, of course." He tried to look conspiritorial. "How'd you come by a copy?"

Cantanzaro glanced around, leaned closer. Wishful thinking was doing his convincing. "Accidentally. Gambling with a thief. He left it as security for a debt. When I saw what I had, I hurried to Antonisen." A mark, he had long ago learned, often could be disarmed by an open admission of knavery. Forewarned, he would relax, sure

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

he could not be had himself.

"Hardly proper, my dear fellow." Decraehe glanced meaningfully at a dark archway.

The things seemed to be everywhere.

This was the tricky part, getting past being robbed and chucked through the opening. Cantanzaro handed him the book.

"But... but...."

"Yes. It's in Old High Trebec. All the copies are. And the Brothers of Allgire guard the three known copies of translation dictionaries with unbreachable spells. But my victim... er, debtor, also knew what he had. And lately had come into knowledge of the whereabouts of a fourth dictionary." He produced the map. "He had taken this off a tomb-miner in the Mountains of Dautenhain, who mentioned the dictionary as he was dying."

"I see. What good does this do me?"

"For a fee I would recover that dictionary. Just enough to establish myself here."

Decraehe frowned.

"The book is yours. A gift from a grateful immigrant. It's useless to me anyway. Being a foreigner, I'm ineligible for public office.

"Never understood why the Brothers worry about it getting out. The dictionary is the important thing. With that, a man could make himself *King* of Antonisen."

"Those mountains are four days away. Four there, four back, plus time to find and open the tomb. The election's in seven days." The claws of greed kept pulling Decraehe's face into off expressions.

"The tomb is found and open. Given a good horse and suitable incentive fee, traveling round the clock, I could deliver in five days."

"Why didn't you bring it?" Decraehe whined.

Cantanzaro tried to look amazed. "With the streets full of rogues who'd cut my throat to get it? No, begging your pardon, I wanted a firm contract and gold in my purse before I took that risk."

"But if I paid you, what would keep you from running off with my money?"

"The honor of the contract. The value of Cantanzaro's word is known in a dozen cities. Also, you'd hold half the fee for payment on delivery. In fact, I'll leave the map. It's burned on the back of my brain anyway. Then, if I cheated, you could sell book and map, at a handsome profit, to someone willing to wait till next election. Moneywise, you can't lose."

Cantanzaro settled back in his chair, let the wheels turn. Decraehe would be thinking that he could have him chucked through the archway after relieving him of money.

"Twenty percent advance."

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

Cantanzaro smiled thinly. Decraehe had swallowed the whole six-legged horse. "Fifty. Against your certitude of becoming Chief Fool."

"But you'll have no time to spend it anyway...."

"A matter of principal. Of having equal amounts to lose. Just a hundred soli...."

"A hundred! Thief! What...."

"Against the certitude of becoming Chief Fool? A bargain at ten times the price. The payoffs from gamblers and thieves' markets would return that in a week. You must realize, a man of my station must establish himself properly in his new land."

"Twenty. Ten now and ten later."

"Ninety now and ninety later."

An hour later, with fifty gold soli practically ripping his belt off, Cantanzaro swung astride Decraehe's best horse. The would-be Fool had saddled the beast himself. With book held tightly in hand, he opened the courtyard gate.

An older man stumbled through. "Any way to greet your father, boy?" he grumbled. He scowled at Cantanzaro, at Decraeh, at the book. "What's this? My first edition Zavadil, that was stolen a month ago! Nursing a thieving viper in my own bosom...."

This Cantanzaro heard as he spurred through the gate, cursing the ill-fortune that dogged his steps. It happened every time, at the moment of triumph. Those old crones, the Fates, must have developed an abiding hatred for him.

Decraehe shrieked like an old woman. Antonisen poured into the streets. The warning swifted ahead; Cantanzaro reached the Harlequin Gate only to find it already closed. He swung into a side street, switched back and forth till he had gained a momentary lead, then eased up to the first inn he encountered. To the stableman he called, "Return this animal to the home of Ablan Decraehe immediately," and tossed a solus. The man's eyes grew huge. It was a small fortune to one of his station.

"Instantly, my lord."

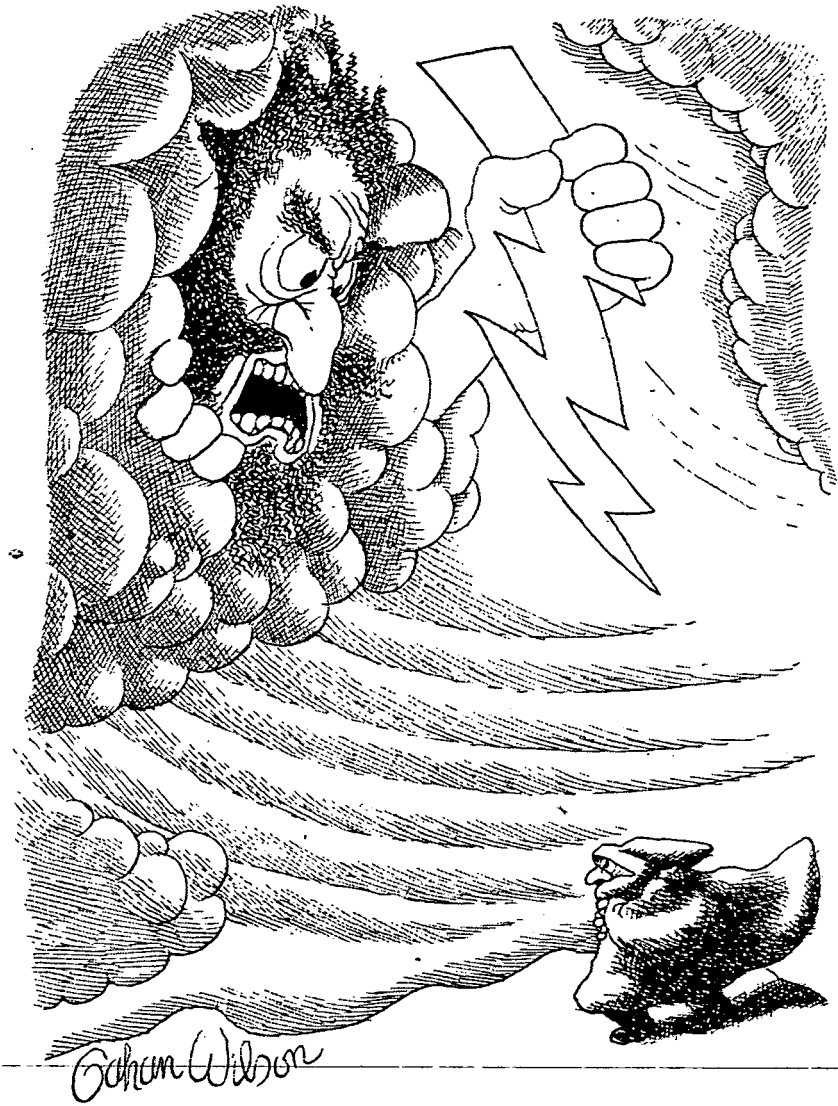
Five minutes later, from a rooftop, Cantanzaro watched the protesting stableman being hustled to an archway. "Hornbostel! Hornbostel!" the crowd chanted.

Grinning, Cantanzaro waited till night, then went over the wall.

He kept on grinning till, in Venverloh, he tried spending one of his remaining forty-nine soli, all of which proved to be lead thinly surfaced with gold. The one he had checked by biting, which Decraehe had given for that purpose, had been the one he had tossed to the stable worker.

They had low black archways in Venverloh too.

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED



"I suppose you don't think this is hard work!"

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

Charles L. Grant is a regular contributor who won the 1977 Science Fiction Writers of America Nebula award for "A Crowd of Shadows" (F&SF, June 1976). His most recent novel is The Hour of the Oxrun Dead *(Doubleday), which uses the same Oxrun Station setting as the first rate new story we offer below.*

Hear Me Now, My Sweet Abbey Rose

by CHARLES L. GRANT

Dusk; a haze of drifting light that keeps the eye from resting too long on a single tree, a faint star, a leaf that bumps over disused furrows poking out weeds. It drops a lace curtain over the farmhouse and blinds the windows, stills the dog, stirs the cat, makes the kitchen seem far warmer than it is. It takes the freshness from the daylight and returns the evening to the memory of winter. And summons the rolling black that follows a breeze from the surrounding hills. And by the time nightfall is full, and heavy, the only sound is a flock of geese invisible, calling, guiding, sweeping over the land and the house and the hills and the breeze.

Nels leaned against the kitchen door frame and shivered when he heard the birds. Beautiful in the bask of the sun, they were unpleasantly lonely in the hours past nine. Too lonely by far, and he slapped a hand to his thigh, closed the door and moved to sit at the table in front of the iron-black stove. Kelly turned from the refrigerator and held out a bottle of ginger ale. He nodded and pushed back in the hard wooden chair, swallowing at air, idly scratching at the traces of wattle at his throat. He said nothing. He liked to watch his wife move from place to place, within or without the confines of the house, knowing that other men envied him without reservation, knowing that he envied himself in his fear of losing her. She filled a glass, waited for the bubbles to settle, topped it and set it in front of him. Then, and only then, did she sit opposite him with a cup of tea protected by her palms.

"They're late," she said, blowing upward to fend off a strand of black hair drifting down toward her right eye. "I told them before dark."

"The place is still new," he

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

answered, wrinkling his nose at the carbonation splashing into his face while he drank. "If they get lost, they'll call."

"Grace will," she said with a smile, "but not Abbey or Bess. They've got dollar signs in their eyes already, or didn't you notice."

He laughed and swept a plate of shortbread toward him, picked up one of the flour-and-butter cakes and bit into it. "They take after me. Grace is all yours." Then, with a frown: "Are you worried?"

She shrugged. "Not really, I guess. I just don't want them to have all their fun before the vacation is over, that's all. To get it all out on the first big night in town will make everything else seem ... well, quiet."

"Dull," he said. "What you mean is, dull."

It was her turn to laugh, lightly, mocking the sigh of the breeze now turned to wind.

Ten o'clock, and the muttering of a car coughing into silence. Nels hustled Kelly into the front room, grabbed at a magazine and switched on the television. Then he thumped at the cushions on the dark quilted sofa, waved his wife to an armchair, and snapped open the first page before the front door swung in and his daughters arrived.

Physically, they were Kelly; from the black hair and eyes to the dark lips and slender figures to the nearly sickly pale complexions made disturbingly erotic by the nips of pink at their cheeks. Twenty, nineteen, eighteen, all in college, all with glasses, all standing with hands on hips staring in at their parents. Grace tsked, Abbey sighed, and Bess walked deliberately over to her father and turned the magazine right side up. "You're impossible," she said, kissing him on the cheek. Nels shrugged and asked how it went.

Grace and Abbey slumped to the braided rug by the raised brick hearth and pulled their heavy sweaters over their heads, shook their hair back into place, and folded the sweaters neatly in their laps.

"They may be rich," Grace finally said, "but you cannot believe how incredibly dull they are."

"God, Pop," Abbey said, pulling at her lower lip, "we went to some place called the Chancellor Inn. There's a restaurant upstairs — it's an old farmhouse, see, I think — and there's a poor excuse for a disco on the first floor. Lots of noise. No action."

"They thought we were rubes or something," Bess said, knocking his legs away so she could sit on the couch with him. "Hicks. I think they think we're going to move in here forever. Raise chickens or ducks, or whatever they do on a

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

place like this."

Kelly looked up from her knitting — a sweater for Nels in muted blues and greys — and smiled sympathetically. Then she looked to her husband, frowned when he lit a cigarette, but said nothing when he studiously avoided her glare.

"Did you guys have a good time?" Abbey said, looking to her father.

"We watched the sun set over that tree in the field."

"Great," Bess said. "That's really ... great."

"We heard some geese, too."

"Oh my God," Grace said, "I don't think I can stand any more. I'm tired, folks. I think I'll go to bed."

"Me, too," Bess said quickly. "It's the country air, or something."

Abbey alone stayed behind when the footsteps on the stairs faded into running bath water and the shouts of who gets in first and who uses what towel. She picked up a long splinter of kindling and drew roads between the bricks, connected them, drew them again.

"What's the matter, Abbey?" Nels said softly. "Aren't you tired?"

"Nope," she answered without taking her eyes from the hearth. "Just ... I don't know. I guess I was expecting something different."

Nels stretched out on the couch again and pillowed his hands behind his head, stared at the dark-beamed ceiling and the shadows that lurked there from the lamp next to Kelly. The vacation in May had been his idea, what with all his daughters' schools ending early and he and Kelly climbing the walls from a particularly harsh winter. The farm had been a quick-growing inspiration, sparked by a friend at the office who had lived in this same house once and remembered — so he claimed — the great times he and his own family had had. Rediscovering the land, roots, the whole mystique of a Nature without city. Not to mention, it had been added slyly, the preponderance of wealth in Oxrun Station and the young men who were attached to it. Kelly thought that part of the argument crass and almost unforgivable; Nels didn't think of it at all. His daughters were, in temperament, much like himself — what came, came, and if it didn't — whatever it was — well, there was no use crying. Time never cried for a flower that died. But Abbey was his special flower, hence her middle name, and it disturbed him that she should be disappointed, that the unusual vacation had turned sour for her already. Normally, she was prepared for anything, to try anything, to at least give everything

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

half a chance to prove itself worthy of her attention. But this, he thought, had somehow killed her enthusiasm before she had given it that one half chance.

"What?" he said finally, as she knelt on the hearth and arranged the logs to start a fire. "Come on, girl, what's up?"

"They told us there was a lynching here, back before the Civil War. Some abolitionists were hanged from the tree in the field out back. Four of them, I think. I didn't know they did stuff like that in Connecticut."

"You think the farm is haunted, then?" Kelly said, her disbelief evident and marked with the nail of her practicality.

"No, Mother, of course not."

Kelly looked to Nels, set her knitting in the carpetbag by her side and folded her hands in her lap. "Then what, dear?"

"I don't know, I told you! Let's just say the place doesn't feel right, okay?"

She rose then and hurried from the room, up the stairs and into the giggling storm that erupted when she opened a bedroom door. Nels listened to the laughter for a while and allowed himself a drop of sweet reminiscence, when they had lived in another house in another state, when the girls were younger and going to bed meant only another opportunity to invent new games and friends and create chaos from careful order. And now they were drifting away. It made no difference that he understood the inevitability of it, that young ladies and fledglings soon enough stretched their legs and their wings and discovered that the horizon moved when you approached it. That didn't make any difference at all when the sun had set and his girls were asleep and he could remember pajamas with feet and dolls with calico dresses, carriages and plastic tea sets and braces and boys.

Maudlin, Nels, he told himself; watch it, or you'll next be thinking how close to fifty you are, and that would crimp this week faster than you can sneeze.

Nels, it doesn't feel right, Kelly said with her hands roaming gently over her swollen stomach.

Nonsense.

A mother knows these things, Nels.

All right, then, we'll call Dr. Falbo and see what's what.

It's not that kind of feel.

Then it's the Irish in you and the Norse in me. A combination of fey not seen since the world's creation. Don't worry about it, love, he'll be fine.

And what makes you so sure it'll be a he?

Fey, I told you. I have the sight,

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

in case you didn't know.

And what if it's another girl?

Two girls? Are you kidding? How the hell can I possibly afford two weddings? But ... if it's a girl, we'll name her Kelly Rose, after you and your mother.

Abbey Rose, she said with a grin. After my mother and the theater in Dublin.

If it is a girl, I'll want another shot at it.

You'll keep your distance, Nels Anderson, or you'll be singing soprano in some damned fey choir.

Early the following morning, Grace and Bess took the car into Oxrun to, as they explained, see what was so special about all the fancy jewelry stores clustered there. Kelly ensconced herself in the kitchen to test the reputation of homemade bread. Alone, then, Nels wandered across the fallow field, jumping at startled grey mice, watching a pair of hawks riding the wind beneath a softly blue sky. He stopped every few yards to overturn a rock, dig around a burrow, marvel at the life no city ever maintained, marveling more that such continual amazements could become so mundane that the previous owners of the farm had given it up and moved to Los Angeles. At last, at noon and in no hurry, he reached the tree he had claimed for his own. It was a chestnut squat with age and broad with a crown that was flecked with new green. Weeds and grass grew up to its bole, surrounded knees of roots that nudged through the rocky soil. He had never seen anything quite like it, and as he grabbed at a twig dangling in front of him, wondered if even the yard of their suburban home would ever seem the same.

"Gruesome," a voice said behind him, and he jumped, a hand to his chest, his mouth open.

Abbey laughed delightedly, clutching at her stomach, stepped backward and fell, her legs splayed and her hands behind her to prop her up. Nels shook his head in rapidly diminishing anger, somewhat embarrassed, and pleased that she had come. He sat where he stood crossed his legs and rested his palms on his knees. "Now that you've assured me ten years less of a magnificent life, kid," he said, "you can tell me what was really bothering you last night."

She had been having dreams of dying the past few months, each one sending her screaming into her parents' bed; in the last one, she had risen from her coffin at the church to sit beside her father.

Nels prayed they hadn't started again.

"Come on," he said gently, leaning forward slightly. "Come on, Abbey. You can tell me and the

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

tree. We're old friends, the three of us."

Abbey puffed her cheeks. She was ready to deny him, then sagged and began pulling at green blades by her thighs. "They thought we were hicks," she said. "Kind of a reverse snobbery, I guess. Dumb country folk from the city, if you know what I mean. First they tried to get us drunk. Then they tried a few old-fashioned wrestling holds. We'd left the car at one of their houses ... Frank's ... he's the one who came out and introduced himself so nicely, remember? We left the car at his house. By the time we got back there, we were a mess. But ..." and she grinned broadly, suddenly, "our virtue was, for the moment, ladies and gentlemen, still intact. Speaking for myself, that is." And her grin became a laugh.

Nels felt the warmth rising from below his collar, saw that she'd recognized his protective anger and coughed to keep himself calm. He reached blindly over his head, caught at a thin branch and pulled until his fingers had stripped a handful of leaves into his palm. He rolled them into a cylinder, pressed, rolled, and felt the moisture released and rubbed into his skin. It was a good feeling and an uncommon one. When he looked up, he saw his daughter staring at him.

"You're all right, though," he said, awkwardly.

"If you're asking if you have to buy a shotgun, the answer is no." She twisted until she was kneeling, took the crushed leaves from his hand and laid them to her cheek, her neck, across her forehead with her eyes closed. Then she stared at the tree and back to him. "Dad," she said, "If you only knew how natural you looked, sitting there."

"Ah," he said. "The primeval in me, that's what it is. One with the land and all that."

"No," she said, frowning as she puzzled it out. "Not quite. But it feels right for you to be here."

"Like it doesn't feel right to be in the house?"

She nodded, quickly shook her head and rose. "It's more like my room back home. I belong there more than anyplace else. You, though ... I think you belong here."

"So I'll quit my job and we can play farmer for the rest of our lives."

She grinned, brushed at her jeans and smoothed her plaid shirt over her breasts. "Dad, what would you do if I got married?"

"I'd cry a lot and wish the boy luck. Lots of it."

"You'd let me? You'd let me go?"

He swallowed quickly the wisecrack that rose, sniffed and spread his hands helplessly. "I'd have to," he said quietly. "But I

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

sure wouldn't want to."

"Neither would I," she whispered, knelt and kissed him on the cheek. "I love you, Dad. I don't say it enough, I know, but I love you."

Nels watched her leave. And the sadness that suddenly cloaked him grew when his hand absently touched at his close-cropped hair, blond turning white. That, he thought, is what New England does for you, pal; autumn in the spring. He knew there was a tear in his left eye, but he refused to acknowledge it by wiping it away. Soon enough, too soon, far too soon, it was gone, and he turned on his buttocks to stare at the bole, to follow its winding configurations and ease his mind into a state of near-trance. And it wasn't until a shout floated across the field that he came out of it, pushed himself to his feet stiffly and trotted back toward the farmhouse. He saw Grace standing on the back porch, waving her arms, and the trot became a run, the run a dash when his eldest leapt from the steps and raced toward him. She was crying as she dropped into his arms, sobbing out a garbled story of the three men they had met the night before; they had cornered her and Bess in a luncheonette, pressing until the girls had become frightened, following them to the turnoff from the main road and sitting there in their convertible, waiting.

"I'll have a look," he said as he led her back into the house. Kelly was not in the kitchen, but he heard soft sounds from upstairs and knew she was busily confortiñg the youngest. Grace sniffed loudly and borrowed his handkerchief. Ordinarily, had it been Abbey and Bess, he would have fallen instantly into the comforting father role he played for skinned knees and elbows, nightmares and thunderstorms. But Grace was twenty, a woman, and not easily shaken. Those men must have been more than simply crude, more than only playfully threatening. He set his daughter in the living room's armchair and slipped into his windbreaker.

"Stay there," he said. "Get yourself a brandy and light a fire. It'll be cold tonight. A Connecticut May is more like March."

He waited until she had reached for the decanter on the sideboard, then unhurriedly stepped outside and slid in behind the wheel of the car. The keys were still in the ignition, and he fired the engine, turned round the oval drive marked with a birch in its center, and drove the half-mile to the stone pillars that flanked the farm road's entrance. He braked, got out and walked to the main road that led in a direct line back to the village. There were no cars, no trucks, nothing at all that he could see save

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

another field across the way and the faint rise of the low hill that marked the village park. Not a hill, really, he thought incongruously; more like a bump that the trees came to like.

He waited for nearly half an hour, leaning against one of the low brown pillars and smoking. When the twilight chill finally numbed his hands, he gave it up and drove back to the house, went inside and found all his women in front of Grace's fire. They were playing a word game found in the bookcase built into the back wall, and when they noticed him, they laughed, waved, and ordered him into the kitchen to make a sandwich supper.

"Done," he said, shucking his coat and tossing it to the couch. "Just don't complain if I'm not as good as Bess."

So she isn't the smartest in the world, Kelly, so what? She's got brains enough to make it through any decent college, and that's all that counts.

Suppose Abbey doesn't want to go to college?

All right, so she doesn't go. It's her choice, isn't it. It's her life, not mine, for crying out loud.

Nels, sometimes I think you love her too much.

Kelly! Are you ... are you saying that I spoil the girl? God forbid, no, dope. I just mean ... well, sometimes I think she's closer to you than any of us are, that's all.

Good Lord. Kelly, do the other girls ... do they resent it? I mean, have I —

Failed them? Nels, you're beautiful when you're worried. No, you haven't failed any of us at all. You worry too much. That's your problem, you know, you worry too much. Especially about Abbey. It's fine to say it's her life, not yours, but whenever shes out, more so than with Grace or Bess, you lose more sleep than anyone I know.

I hate to admit it, but you're right. God, that's frightening, you know it? But sooner or later, she'll leave us. She'll grow up and the ties will be gone before we know it. It'll happen so slowly we won't even notice.

Maybe. I hope so. I hope it is slow.

It always is, isn't it?

I suppose so. Anyway, she'll probably be the first to get married, and then it'll be her husband's problem.

Maybe, but I'd hate to be the man to try her out.

Now why did you say that?

I don't know. I really don't know.

They were carrying no weapons that he could see, but the fact didn't make him any less nervous. He had heard the tires on the dirt

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

road long before anyone else, had excused himself from the game to walk out onto the porch for an ostensible breath of fresh air. He refrained from lighting a cigarette, leaned against a post and waited until the car, a low black convertible, had glided without headlights around the birch and parked in front of his own. Three men climbed out, one of them giggling into a fist, and he knew instantly they were drunk and therefore too dangerous to reason with, unless he were lucky.

They arranged themselves at the foot of the porch steps. Steady, not weaving, but the stench of beer was as strong as their obvious sense of masculine outrage.

"Gentlemen," he said, more to hear his own voice than to make them aware he was there, "I don't recall any invitations being sent out for a party tonight."

"Want to see Gracie," said a stocky sweatered man. It was too dark to make out their features; they stood just beyond the diffused glow of the living room lights, were irregular black holes against the black of the evening. "I want to tell her something."

"Grace," he said evenly, "is busy right at the moment. I'll give her the message. Who shall I say is calling?"

"Oh my, who shall I say is calling," mimicked the one in the middle. "You're very polite, aren't you? Well, I can be polite, too, you know. That's Brett over there, and I'm Frank. See? I can be polite if I want to."

"Thank you," Nels said.

The one on the right, the unnamed one, stepped toward him, a man Grace's age but without the lines that would give him age and personality. He raised a fist. "Abbey has a date with me, old man, and I want her out here."

"My goodness," Nels said, pushing away from the post. "I don't think she remembers. And since she doesn't remember, perhaps you ought to find another place to play, all right, boys?"

Brett laughed, then, lunged and tripped over the bottom step as Nels whipped a shoe up into his chest, spilling him back into the unnamed one. They sprawled, cursing, and took a long time getting up. Frank just stood there, glaring, until Nels took a step down, and another. Then he swung a wild fist that Nels easily trapped with his hand, flung it aside contemptuously and pushed the man's face back sharply with his palm. He kicked out again to catch Brett between his legs, grinning at the anguished howl while he spun toward Frank, who was trying to dash past him. He caught the man's jacket, spun him back and into the side of their car, grabbed

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

his legs and dumped him into the back seat. Brett, on his knees and retching, was hauled up by his collar and spilled into the passenger side. The third man turned to run when Nels faced him, shrugged and slid in behind the wheel. When Frank rose from the car floor and glared, Nels smiled at him politely.

"Don't say it," he said. "If you're going to come back and teach me a lesson, just come back. But don't say it, all right? It's much too corny."

He was back in the house before the car thundered away, surrounded by his wife and children whose amazement at his reaction was only slightly less than his own. He quickly dropped onto the couch, gladly took hold of an offered brandy and sipped at it until his hands stopped their trembling. When the tale was told, then, the girls preened proudly and Kelly clucked in admiration. Only Abbey, however, stood to one side, staring at him as though he were a stranger, yet not a stranger but rather someone she had known and had not recognized before. Her expression bothered him, but he thought nothing of it until he was in bed and Kelly was tracing promises across his chest.

"Scared?" he said into the darkness, feeling the cold of her hands.

"A little."

"Maybe we should leave in the morning. I asked for trouble and they'll probably give it to me. And I don't want you girls hurt, Kel."

"You did all right out there, Viking."

"They were drunk. A boy could have done it. Bess could have, for that matter."

"That's sexist."

He laughed dutifully, fell silent, a moment later sat straight up and leaned against the headboard.

"What?" Kelly said, her fear too soon open to hide. "What is it?"

"We will go on a picnic tomorrow," he said. "A regular old-fashioned picnic in the field beneath the tree. Complete with mice and ants and flies and all that good jazz."

– "For God's sake, Nels, go to sleep."

"But damnit, I'm a hero! Don't I deserve some kind of a reward?"

Her quiet laughter infuriated him until she yanked him down by the hair to kiss him.

He said nothing at all about the look on Abbey's face, the look that was part fear, part question, a large part astonishment: you really *won't* let me go, will you, Daddy?

He said nothing.

He only shuddered.

For crying out loud, Kelly, I don't see any real problem.

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

But, Nels, she won't go. She's been accepted and she won't go!

All right, so she won't go, so what? If she wants to stay at home and go to the community college, that's fine with me. In fact. I'd rather have it that way. I don't think she's ready to leave just yet.

But what if she —

Kelly, will you please leave her alone?

No, Nels, you *leave her alone!*

The brown-and-blue blanket still smelled of the attic, but no one seemed to mind, and he sat with his back against the tree and watched them struggling with the lumps in the ground as they set out the food, the bottles of wine, the paper plates Kelly had bought in the village that morning. The air was slightly hazed with uncaring clouds that occasionally blinded the sun, but the day stayed warm and the breeze kept the light from baking too hot. They had discovered a battered soft tennis ball in a closet and had played run-the-bases, man-in-the-middle, and anything else they could remember or devise for the best part of three hours before their hunger rebelled and forced them to eat. The wine spilled freely, then, and Nels felt expansively patriarchal as he fed and was fed, joked and was laughed at, listened for the hundredth time to the stories, the gossip, a vivid reenactment by his three daughters of his protection of the fortress the evening, the century, the lifetime before. Then they made solemn plans for Grace's birthday at the end of the coming week, for Bess' sophomore year, for Kelly's new furniture in their bedroom at home.

Then Abbey announced it was wild flower time, and the girls rushed off in a scattering while Nels brought his wife to his lap and nuzzled her hair, stroked her arm and watched as a black-bottomed cloud threatened the sky.

"Let's go for a walk," he said suddenly; and they did, wandering away from the three and the house until the latter was gone and the former a shadow.

"Abbey had another nightmare last night," Kelly said.

"It was those men," he said quickly. "They'd be enough — "

"No," she said, stopping, turning in the circle of his arms and looking into his eyes. "She dreamt she was dead, again."

He shook his head. "She would have come to see me, like always."

"I heard her crying, Nels. She didn't want to, and she did. There's something wrong, Nels. She's ... she's afraid of you."

"She's had the dreams before," he said, ignoring her.

"Nels, this is serious, and you know it."

"It's the Irish in her."

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

"Damnit, Nels!" And she slapped his arms down and away, stalked back toward the picnic. He watched her go, his fists clenched, then hurried to catch up, saying nothing but remaining at her side. He would have tried an epigram or two, something appropriate or entirely non sequitur, but a sudden *crack* made him glance up at the sky. The wind had risen, cold and sifting through the trees at their back like some stalking beast at midnight. He hunched his shoulders and rubbed the back of the neck. Another *crack,* and Kelly stopped, her eyes wide and staring toward the tree. He followed and saw his daughters huddled around the bole, clutching at each other, heard then their screams in atonal harmony and ... was running.

Kelly shouted behind him.

He ran, nevertheless.

A burrow snagged at his ankle and he fell, barely getting his hands into position in time, feeling his cheeks scrape across the rough ground to let out the blood.

Kelly was past him by the time he had regained his feet, and the shooting continued, the screaming continued, and as the tree grew closer than a hundred yards, he realized that no strike was meant, no killing ... only a scare; and he began looking for the three men who had been beaten and were now sniping back. It was possible, he thought, that they were still behind the treeline at the edge of the field, hidden and laughing, but he only ran faster, toward the tree and his children. Kelly's arms were waving them down when they rose to greet her, and then ... she was stopped.

She fell as though tripped, but Nels saw the spurt of blood at her left shoulder and fell beside her, shouting to Grace to keep the others down.

"Don't die, Kel, for God's sake don't die," he whispered repeatedly as he tore at her sweater, his jacket, his shirt, to ball up cloth and jam it against the wound. It came from a fair distance away, some part of him noted, or the shell would have gone through. As it was, she was too stunned to do more than whimper, too astonished to yet feel the pain. When he was done, he lifted her in his arms and carried her awkwardly, suddenly shouting in angered panic when Abbey stood to help him.

And was stopped.

With a scream.

She stood motionless for a second that lasted much longer, toppled with one hand grasping at a branch for support. Her fingers closed on a leaf. It held. Tore. She was face down on the blanket.

Bess broke and ran for the house, but there was no more firing.

There were images, then, of no

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

certain continuity: of red flashing lights and white-coated men and men in blue uniforms and men in dark suits and a man intoning and a man moaning and a sling for an arm and a bandage for a face, and a printed sympathy card from the real estate agent in town.

Abbey was burried in the cemetery in Oxrun.

Grace took Bess back to their home, to clean and to wait for their parents and school.

Kelly wandered the house.

Nels wandered the field. The three men had had alibis, and none were arrested. Revenge gave way to sorrow to rage to a feeling that something ... something was not right, not right.

"Nels, we have to go home. Your job —"

"I can't, Kelly. Don't ask me why. But I ... can't."

Nels wandered, sat beneath his tree and wondered.

"Nels, they're giving your job away. I ... we have to go back now. Grace and Bess need us. Damnit, Nels, it's been almost a month!"

He wanted to tell her to pack, that it was over at last; he wanted to say that life must go on, though, with Millay, he wondered just why. He wanted to. He could not. Kelly left the next day on the first morning train.

And he sat in the kitchen until the sun went down, drinking coffee, drinking tea, shaking his head and waiting for the tears, until just before ten he stiffened.

Oh, Jesus, no, he thought.

He pushed away from the table and stumbled to the door, opened it, crossed the porch and walked to the field. He was frightened. More frightened than when he had heard the first shot and knew what it was, more frightened than when he had stood on the porch and faced three drunken men. He looked back over his shoulder and saw the single light in the kitchen, warm, slightly blurred, and fading.

He told himself to stop. He did not, and could not, until he had reached the tree.

There was no wind.

The branches stirred.

"Abbey?" he whispered.

Stirred, and scratched.

"Abbey, I have a family still. They need me. You've got to let me go."

Leaves trembled.

"Abbey, please, I'm your father!"

Trembled, and curled.

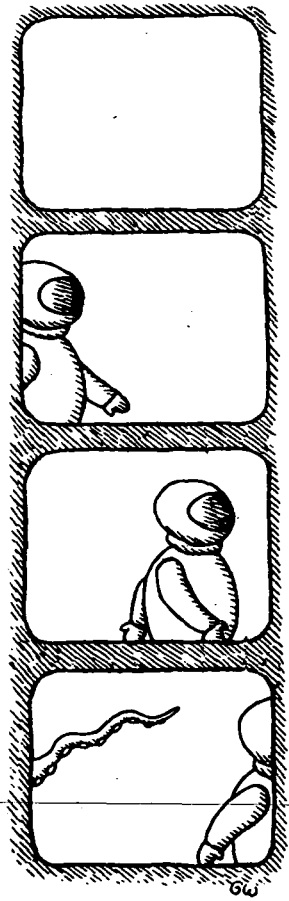
He expected a voice on the wind that did not blow, a young girl's voice that would touch his mind with melancholy and a final good-by.

What he did not expect was the muttering of anger, and finally the voice that hissed *turnabout, Father, is not always fair.*

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

BAIRD SEARLES

Films and Television



THE ROAD TO ALBANY

Roger Zelazny may well be the most popular of the "third generation" of science fiction writers (considering seminal figures like Edgar Rice Burroughs and Doc Smith as the granddads, and the Campbell writers — Heinlein, van Vogt, Asimov et al. — as a second generation). Zelazny's Amber series is probably the hottest today with the possible exception of Bradley's Darkover novels.

Despite all previous experience, one could not help anticipating a "major motion picture" (why is it never "soon to be a minor motion picture?") made from a Zelazny book, in this case, *Damnation Alley*.

Finally, after a long delay before release (which is always dubious making), the film has opened. One curious fact: the working title on the film was *Survival Run*. Now, suddenly, it appears under the original title. Could that mean that the film industry is suddenly acknowledging the fact that a science fiction name (book *or* author) might have some drawing power?

Whatever ... if I were Mr. Zelazny, I would disclaim anything to do with it, and insist that they change the title back to *Survival Run*. It may be the worst s/f film I

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

have ever seen — and I'm including *Fire Maidens of Outer Space; The Giant Claw,* and *Planet of the Apes.* I cannot resist giving a precis of the plot.

In a super-secret Army base in the Southwest, we meet the Major (who is always referred to as "the Major" because he's a spit and polish type) and another young officer named Tanner. While they are silo-sitting, nuclear war occurs (lots of stunning shots of H bombs going off).

Sometime later (we're not told how long) we find that everyone at the base has survived. However, the Earth has tilted off its axis, which not only makes for ugly weather conditions, but has tinted the sky a nasty polarized green (against which anything has that blue halo which says "process shot") and given everything else (or maybe just the camera lens) the effect of a red filter.

Tanner returns from somewhere on his motorcycle (how did we know there was going to be a motorcycle in this flick?), dodging 6-foot scorpions on the way, just in time to have the base blow up because some idiot had fallen asleep with a cigarette while reading *Playboy.*

The Major, Tanner, and two expendable types manage to live through this, too, and the Major unveils, to music fit for the Second Coming, two "Landmasters," mutant half-tracks with two front ends that can supposedly get through anything. He announces that they are going to Albany. *Albany?*

Yes, Albany, because that's the only place that they've gotten a radio signal from. The mere fact that it's the same message repeated for two years doesn't seem to matter.

So they're off! The first thing they run into is four cyclones (tinted red) which do in one Landmaster and one of the expendables.

Next, Las Vegas, which still has electricity though half buried in sand. They have a grand time playing the slot machines, and then a beautiful young woman appears in a dressing gown and announces that she has survived. So they invite her along to Albany.

In Salt Lake City, she and Tanner take off on the bike; the Major and the other expendable try to refuel. The expendable is done in by a menace which the Major tells the other party of by radio in what may be one of the great lines of the science fiction film: "The city is infested with killer cockroaches!"

In the Rockies (which look suspiciously like the California hills), they find a dear little boy, and take *him* along to Albany.

They find an abandoned cafe in the desert which isn't abandoned, but inhabited by four hillbilly nas-

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

ties with shotguns and advanced cases of radiation poisoning make-up. They want to keep the beautiful young woman and the dear little boy (the latter for purposes unspecified), but the major blows up the place with the bazooka on the top of the Landmaster, so *that's* all right.

In Detroit (yes, Detroit) the polarized green sky looks even nastier and 2001-type lights start shooting through it, which means that the Earth is tilting back to its old axis. So they are overcome by a tidal wave and sink, but the Landmaster can operate underwater, and so they eventually bob to the surface. "It seems to be clearing," says the dear little boy.

And indeed it has. There are lovely blue skies, and puffy white clouds, and beautiful trees, and rock and roll on the radio, with a female disc jockey who announces she's broadcasting from Albany. *Albany?*

On their handy, dandy two-way radio, the Major tells the female disc jockey that they have survived and arrived, but where are they?

"Heavens to Betsy," says the female d-j. "You're just 17 miles from Albany." *Albany?*

So Tanner swings the beautiful young lady onto his bike and they ride 17 miles in one minute, and there are green fields, and horsies, and white picket fences, and children playing. And this, at last, is Albany. *Albany?*

Final freeze frame. The End.

All I can say further is that all those people who came down on *Star Wars* because it was "childish," "mindless," "inept," "silly," or "fatuous," should be condemned to see *Damnation Alley* ten times to find out what those words really mean.

Compared to DA, a new syndicated series from England — *Star Maidens* — seems downright logical. With the usual good production and effects that we have come to expect from English series, it is really some silliness about a matriarchal planet named Medusa that is torn out of its solar system and comes to rest somewhere around the orbit of Neptune (or is it Uranus — never could keep those two straight). Whereupon two of their poor downtrodden men escape to Earth, pursued by two of the women, who are got up like Charo playing Elizabeth I.

It wasn't until the narrator intoned portentously in episode 2 that "... space has no fury like a female planet scorned" that I realized it was a comedy.

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

The mark of a true professional is consistency, and few sf short story writers have been as consistent for as long a time as Robert F. Young, who is always polished and entertaining and surprising, as in this new chiller . . .

Down The Ladder

by ROBERT F. YOUNG

Summer was when Jeff used to go down to the House the most. "Well," he'd say to his mother, "I guess I'll go down to the House," and she'd know right away what house he meant because he went there so many times.

His mother never had much use for the House, and she seldom went there herself. Even in those days it was old and run-down. People used to say it hadn't been painted since the Civil War, but of course they were exaggerating. It *was* badly in need of paint, though. The clapboards were almost bare, some of them were warped, and the lower ones were starting to mildew.

In the beginning, the House had consisted of a squarish two-story structure with a gable roof. Then a one-story wing, with a porch running its entire length, had been added. Over the years the secondary door that provided direct access to the wing superseded the front door, an eventuality that promoted the side yard to the rank of front yard. Completely carpeted with bluebells and shaded by a profusion of lilac trees, it was the most unusual front yard on Main Street.

There were several chairs on the porch, one of them a comfortable rocking chair. It was in this chair that Jeff's uncle used to sit and rock. He liked to sit and rock, Uncle George did. People used to say that that was all he ever did. More exaggeration. Nevertheless, Jeff seldom went down to the House in summer that he didn't find his uncle sitting on the porch, rocking. And sending, at evenly spaced intervals, a thin, brown stream of tobacco juice arcing over the porch railing.

Inside, the House was spotless, and as neat as a pin — if you discounted the boxes of obsolete household items piled in the

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

corners. Jeff's grandmother, when she was alive, had never thrown anything away. The front hallway, the door to which was kept closed winter and summer and which, like the upstairs, was off-limits to visitors, had so many old newspapers piled along its walls you had to walk sideways to reach the stairway. In addition to the stacks of old newspapers, the hallway contained stacks and stacks of the magazines Jeff's grandmother used to subscribe to, such as *Godey's Lady's Book* and *Lady's Friend,* and there were whole boxfuls of the Victorian novels she used to read. Jeff found these things out by sneaking into the hallway when his uncle was out to the barn and his grandfather was dozing in his rocker by the living-room stove. Jeff's grandfather was still alive then. He was a well-to-do retired farmer who had married late in life and who owned property all over town. When he died he left everything to his older son (Jeff's uncle), except the big frame house on Elm Street, which he left to Jeff's father, who was already living there. The frame house on Elm Street was where Jeff was born.

Sometime Uncle George would go into the front hallway and bring back old-fashioned "funny papers" for Jeff to look at. One day he went all the way upstairs and returned with a toy that he said he'd come across in his closet that morning. It was the most fascinating toy Jeff had ever seen. There were two parts to it. One part was a yard-long strip of wood about two and a half inches wide and about three-quarters of an inch thick. It was painted bright red, and running up and down it, approximately two inches apart, were two parallel rows of two-penny nails. The nails were spaced vertically at even intervals. They had been driven only halfway into the strip and had been staggered so that those in the left row were approximately three-eighth of an inch lower than those in the right.

The other part of the toy was a little man that had been cut from a quarter-inch-thick sheet of wood. His arms were extended straight out on either side, and he had queer clothing painted on him. His sketched-in face was comical, and his little lips were turned up at the corners in a fixed smile. To get him to "climb" down the "ladder," you positioned him so that his arms rested across the two topmost nails, then you released him. First one arm would slide off a nail, then the other, and down he would go, *clickety-click-click-click,* to the floor, his body swinging first one way, then the other.

All the while Jeff was playing with the toy, Uncle George seemed

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

nervous. It was as though he'd had second thoughts about bringing it downstairs. In any case, when he took it back up he never brought it back down again. But Jeff never forgot it, and, years later during his grandfather's wake when everyone was too preoccupied to notice, he sneaked upstairs, got the toy out of Uncle George's closet, sneaked it out of the House and took it home. He played with it in his bedroom for hours, sending the manikin down the ladder so many times it was a wonder his arms didn't fall off. Finally, growing bored, Jeff held the ladder a few feet above the floor before letting the manikin go. After the manikin slipped off the bottom "rung" he turned a complete somersault in midair and landed squarely on his head. Delighted, Jeff held the ladder even higher before releasing him. This time when he struck the floor he broke into three pieces. Furious, Jeff broke the ladder in two and threw it, along with the remains of the little man, into the trash can. He was afraid that when Uncle George missed the toy he would accuse him of taking it. But Uncle George never said a word. He just gave him a funny look the next time he went down to the House.

Behind the House there was a large tract of land that extended all the way back to the creek. Jeff's grandfather (and later, his uncle) owned every square inch of it. After you went past the barn you came to a grassy lane that used to be a wagon road, then you walked down the lane between two rows of ramshackle sheds that housed desuetudinous farm equipment. Presently you came to a long, shallow depression that once had been a millpond. A causeway bisected it, and after crossing the causeway you descended a gentle slope into a big apple orchard. The trees were unpruned even in those days, and walking through the orchard was like walking through a jungle. Beyond the orchard the ground dipped sharply. This was where the creek bank had been when the creek was much wider. Now, sycamores and willows and poplars grew where water once had flowed (and still did sometimes during spring thaws). After making your way among the sycamores and the willows and the poplars, you came at last to the creek. Jeff spent countless summer days wading in its shallow waters. Sometimes he took his homemade fishing pole along, but he seldom used it. Catching crayfish in his bare hands was more fun. He liked to tear their claws off and watch them writhe when he threw them back in the water. One time he saw a water snake. They told him afterward that he'd imagined it. "Hallucinated" was the word the doctor had

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

used. But they'd been wrong. He saw the snake *before* he fell and laid open his knee — not afterward.

The tapping on the back door began again, and again Jeff got up from the living-room sofa where he was sitting, drinking beer and watching *Charlie's Angels,* and went out to the kitchen, opened the inside door and peered through the storm-door screen. He'd left the back-porch light on from the time before, but again he saw no one. He closed the inside door angrily, shivering a little in the clammy night air that had wafted into the room; then he returned to the living room and sat back down on the sofa. He knew he shouldn't let the tapping upset him. It was close to Halloween and it was only natural for the neighborhood kids to be out playing pranks and even more natural for them to be playing them on him. This was his first night in the New House, which made him a newcomer in the neighborhood and, ex officio, the most logical victim.

The New House stood on the site of the Old. It was Cape Cod, with an attached double garage. One side of the garage housed his old Biscayne, which as yet he hadn't been able to bring himself to part with; the other side housed his new El Dorado.

He picked up his bottle of beer from the coffee table, was about to raise it to his lips when he saw that it was empty. He went out to the kitchen, got another one out of the fridgie and came back and resumed his seat. On the big TV screen across the room, Farrah Fawcett-Majors kneed one of the three musclemen who had just attacked her, karate-chopped the second and executed a spectacular flying mare on the third.

Jeff chug-a-lugged a third of the fresh bottle and set it down on the coffee table. He'd been drinking more than usual since his wife Dolores had got her divorce on the grounds of cruelty, and the casual observer might have concluded from this that he'd finally stepped across the line between social drinking and full-fledged lushhood that he'd been skirting most of his life. Nothing could have been farther from the truth. He kept his drinking strictly under control, never touching a drop before 8:00 P.M. and never drinking anything but beer. And every morning at exactly 7:00 A.M. he showed up at his restaurant, nattily dressed and freshly shaven, and walked into the coffee shop and ordered ham and eggs and coffee.

His restaurant was his pride and joy. He'd always wanted to go into business for himself, but hard luck had dogged him all his life and defeated his every attempt — until

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

his inheritance had come through. Now, finally, he had been able to realize his potential and to assume his rightful role in the business world.

His presence in the coffee shop at such an early hour was designed to keep his hired help on the ball, but it served other ends as well. The restaurant proper catered to throughway travelers (there was an exit less than a mile out of town), but the coffee shop was dependent upon local trade. Shopworkers mostly, and plumbers' helpers and minor municipal employees. His daily consumption of a workingman's breakfast, his presence on the public side of the counter, and his undeviating custom of greeting everyone who came in by his first name provided proof positive that despite his sudden elevation to a higher social echelon he didn't consider himself one whit better than anyone else, that he was still "just plain Jeff." It also enabled him to keep posted on the goings-on about town — on who was sleeping in whose bed, whose wife was stepping out, and whose husband. The coffee shop, since its incipience, had become an unofficial news center where you could get the low-down on everything and everybody.

The tapping on the back door started up again. This time Jeff decided to ignore it. It continued for a while, then died away.

He'd had the Old House razed not long after Uncle George died. Christ! — he'd had to. Remodeling it would have been tantamount to rebuilding it. It had been too damned old. Granted, many of the other houses on Main Street were old too, but they'd always been kept up, painted every three or four years. Recently some of them had been covered with aluminum siding and looked brand new. But the House had been too far gone to justify the expense such siding would have incurred. Razing had been the only answer. Even so, Jeff hadn't acted on the spur of the moment. He'd gone all through the House, checking the floor joists, examining the foundation, sounding the walls. Once, he'd stayed there overnight. Once had been enough. What with the rustlings and the scrapings and the clatterings that kept coming from the living room and the dining room and the kitchen and just about every place else, he'd hardly slept a wink. The damned place must have been infested with rats. How Uncle George had stood it, he would never know.

Anyway, he'd hired an auctioneer and got rid of everything the House contained — the furniture, the kitchen stove, the dishes, the pots and pans, the Victorian books,

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

the old magazines, the old newspapers, the boxes of junk in the corners (people bought the stuff up like crazy and at fantastic prices; they even bought the old newspapers). Then he brought in a wrecking contractor and had the place demolished. No doubt Uncle George had turned over in his grave, but that couldn't be helped. The old man had never been in tune with the times anyway — never, in his whole shiftless life. Sitting on the porch, rocking, while the House moldered; letting the lilac trees in the front yard proliferate to a point where you couldn't see the porch from the sidewalk; letting the barn fall down and the sheds housing the farm equipment collapse; letting the millpond turn into a paradise for sumac trees; letting the apple orchard turn into a vast thicket; letting the forest by the creek turn into a sanctuary for crows and purple grackles ... Jeff fixed all that. After he had the House razed, he sold the farm equipment for junk and brought in a crew with bulldozers and chain saws and stump pulverizers and demolished the sheds and what was left of the barn and filled in the millpond and leveled the orchard and the forest, and afterward he had a little artificial lake put in and fairways laid out and greens and sandholes ... It was beautiful when he got done. Just beautiful!

The trouble with old memories is that once one gets in the door others keep crowding in behind it. Another trouble is that the bad ones sometimes elbow aside the good .... "Well," Jeff says to his mother, "I guess I'll go down to the House," and his mother says, "Don't stay too long now — I want you home in time for supper," and he gets his fishing pole out of the shed and goes out into the summer day and walks down Elm Street to Main and across Main to the House. He walks up the path between the lilac trees and the carpets of bluebells and steps onto the porch where Uncle George is sitting, rocking, and says, "Hi, Uncle George," and Uncle George says, "Hi, Jeff — goin' fishin', are ya?" and Jeff goes into the House and says hello to his grandfather, who is sitting by the stove (he sits by it both winter and summer), and his grandfather smiles at him in the warm way he reserves for his only grandson and says hello back, and Jeff walks happily through the House and down the back-porch steps and past the barn and down the lane between the ramshackle sheds and across the causeway and through the orchard and down the bank and through the sycamore-willow-poplar forest to the creek.

The creek in summer is shallow

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

and in most places no more than a foot deep. He takes off his shoes and stockings and rolls his breeches well above his knees and wades into the water. He begins trying to snag minnows with the bent pin he uses for a hook, but it is a futile pastime, and presently he abandons it and starts looking for crayfish to pull the claws off of. He is startled when a long, rope-like object undulates past his feet. Then he is tremendously excited. A water snake! He follows it downstream, but it disappears before he has taken a dozen steps. Disgusted, he climbs back up on the bank. He decides to forget about crayfish and go exploring in the woods. He will be Daniel Boone; his fishing pole will be his rifle. He puts his stockings and shoes back on and enters the wilderness. He slips from tree to tree, alert for bears and wolves and wildcats. At length he comes to the old creek bank. It is steep at this point, but nearby there is a dump comprised of tin cans and broken bottles that forms a ragged ramp to the top. Gingerly he begins climbing up it, avoiding the sharp edges of the tin-can tops and the jagged shards of the broken bottles. He slips and falls just before he reaches the top, but he quickly rights himself and a moment later he is safe. But there is a queer tingling in his right knee. Looking down, he sees that his right stocking, where it covers the kneecap, has been cut diagonally, as though by a razor-sharp pair of scissors. He parts the fabric, recoils from the sight of two pink halves of flesh and an exposed area of gray bone —

"Uncle George!"

He starts moving through the orchard, dragging his right leg, putting as little weight on it as he can. "Uncle George!" He is screaming now, and tears of terror are trickling down his cheeks. "UNCLE GEORGE!" he cries again, even though he knows that Uncle George, faraway and rocking on the porch, cannot possibly hear him.

It begins to grow dark. This is preposterous. It is late afternoon, yes — but night is still a long way off. Mist accompanies the darkness, unfurls among the gnarled trees. He does not look at his knee again. He does not dare to. He knows that by now it must be bleeding copiously, that whole bucketfuls of blood must be gushing from the severed veins and arteries.

The darkness intensifies, the mist thickens. Suddenly weakness overwhelms him and he sinks sobbing to the ground. In the grass around him he hears mysterious rustlings; thin, piping voices. He knows they cannot possibly be real, that he must be imagining them.

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

Presently they go away. The darkness descends with a vengeance. When next it is daylight again, he is being carried. Up the slope to the causeway and across the causeway and up the lane. Past the barn and the House and down Main Street in the direction of the doctor's office. Carried by Uncle George. Uncle George, who couldn't possibly have heard his screams but who somehow did. "Uncle George!" "Gosh, you're gettin' heavy, Jeff. Growin' up real fast, aren't ya?" "Uncle George, am I —" "Thought you was goin' fishin'. Where's your fishin' pole?" "I — I guess I dropped it, Uncle George. Uncle George, am I going to live?" "Course you're goin' t'live! Doc'll take a couple stitches in that knee, and you'll be good as new." "I love you, Uncle George." "Pshaw!"

The tapping on the back door begins again and, furious now, Jeff gets up and strides into the kitchen and jerks open the inside door and shouts, "I don't know who you are or who you think you are, but you'd better get the hell away from here fast or I'll fill your butts with birdshot!" He slams the door so hard the stainless-steel utensils hanging above the stove tremble on their chrome-plated hooks. While he's in the kitchen he gets a fresh bottle of beer out of the fridgie and twists off the cap on his way back to the sofa.

Charlie's Angels have flown away to return again another day, and the news has come on. Jeff half watches, half listens, sucking on his beer. He should be drinking Scotch now, not beer. Hell! Only workingmen drink beer. But he is still "just plain Jeff" and always will be. Besides, when you drink Scotch you run the risk of becoming a lush. Beer is the Moderage of Beveration. Right? Right! "What is it anyway, I got to drink Scotch because I live in a Cape Cod instead of a frame shack and drive a Caddy instead of a beat-up Biscayne?" First thing you know, they'll be telling him he should subscribe to the *Wall Street Journal* and stop reading *The National Enquirer, The National Examiner* and *Midnight.*

The frame "shack" was the house on Elm Street where he was born and which he fell heir to when his mother died (his father had predeceased her by five years). Jeff was already living in it anyway, with his wife Dolores (they'd never had any kids). He'd never really moved out of it, unless you counted the postwar years he'd served with the Army of Occupation in West Germany. When the old lady died he simply went right on living there, the only differences being that now he paid the taxes and the utility bills and that when he said, "Well,

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

I guess I'll go down to the House," he said it just to Dolores.

Uncle George had been living in the House alone ever since his father died. He'd never got around to getting married, and it was certainly too late in the day to think about it now. He could cook passably well, and he kept the kitchen shipshape, and except for the piles of junk in the corners of the living and dining rooms and the trash piled in the hallway, the rest of the House was always neat and clean. In all the times Jeff went down there, though, he never once caught Uncle George washing a dish or wielding a broom. During the warm months he'd always find him sitting on the porch, rocking, and during the cold ones, sitting by the living-room stove in his father's old chair, rocking.

Uncle George's hair thinned out, gradually diminishing to a gray fringe on the back of his head, and he withered and shrank and shriveled. The process took years and years. He went way past the age at which his father had died, and he was well on his way to living twice as long as Jeff's mother.

One time in winter when Jeff went down to the House, he found Uncle George slumped in the rocker by the stove, for once in his life not rocking. At first Jeff thought he was dead, but it turned out that he was only dozing. His face was so pinched and tiny it looked like an elf's. His toothless mouth was a little hole in his face, and his neck was as thin as a chicken's and so weak it could hardly hold his head up. When he talked to you he had to lean back in the chair so he could look up high enough to see your face. "Jeff," he said, "as you prob'ly know, I'm goin' t' leave you the House and the Land, but I want you t'promise me somethin' first."

"Sure, Uncle George," Jeff said.

"I want you t'promise me you'll never tear the House down or sell it t'somebody who will. I know it needs fixin' bad, but you'll have plenty of money t'take care of that. What I don't want is for you t'tear it down. Will you promise me, Jeff? Will you give me your solemn word of honor not t'tear it down and t'see to it nobody else does?"

"Yes, Uncle George."

Of late, Uncle George's mind had developed a tendency to wander, and he sometimes forgot what he'd been talking about and started talking about something else. So Jeff wasn't particularly surprised (although he certainly was mystified) when the old man said, "Them critters is funny. Treat 'em right and they'll do anythin' for you. But it don't pay t'cross 'em. They've got powers, and they allus keep an ace up their sleeve just in

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

case they don't get their way. Ma, she took 'em in. She never did have much likin' for doin' dishes, sweepin' and such — liked t' sit around all the time readin' them books and magazines of hers. Pa, he put up with 'em, and I did too. They're handy t'have around, and they don't eat much — just a nibble now and then. Lately, though, they've been gettin' too big for their britches. So I don't want you t'take any chances, Jeff."

"What critters, Uncle George?"

But apparently the old man's mind had wandered back from wherever it had wandered off to, for instead of answering Jeff's question he said again, "You'll promise not t'tear it down or sell it, won't you, Jeff?"

"Yes, Uncle George," Jeff said solemnly. "I promise."

"Think I'll catnap again. Glad you came down t'see me, Jeff. Come down again."

The thought had crossed Jeff's mind that perhaps he should get the old man to a hospital. He was obviously dying. But if he didn't die in the hospital, the next step would have been to put him in a rest or a nursing home, and either would have put too big a dent in the family fortune. Uncle George wouldn't have gone for the idea anyway. So Jeff said good-by, and left. The next time he went down to the House he found the old man slumped in the rocker in the same manner as before. Only this time he really was dead.

The clown giving the weather report said rain tonight and patches of ground fog in the morning, with intervals of sunshine tomorrow afternoon. Probability of precipitation 60% tonight, 30 tomorrow. Relative humidity 82%. Low tonight 50°; high tomorrow 70; present temperature 59. Winds out of the southwest at 3-6 mph.

Jeff finished his bottle of beer and went out to the kitchen for a fresh one. He promised himself it would be the last: he had a house-warming party scheduled for tomorrow night, and he wanted to be in top form.

As he was reaching into the fridgie, the tapping began again on the back door. "Son of a bitch!" he said and strode across the room, staggering a little, and jerked open the inside door and flung wide the outer. This time he looked down instead of straight ahead.

"Greetings," the foremost of his callers piped. "Now that you have at last perceived us, we can get down to the business on hand. Whereas on the thirtieth of last March you did raze the domicile that for more than half a century had been our place of abode and whereas the chores we performed therein over that period of time

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

entitled us to partial ownership of said domicile, we now, by virtue of those labors, claim partial title to the domicile erected upon its site — to wit, this one — and are forthwith moving in, pursuant to the agreement made with your grandmother and amended to read: 'The chores previously performed by the Parties of the First Part in Domicile Number One shall now be performed by the Parties of the First Part in Domicile Number Two, in return for which the Party of the Second Part promises to provide ample living-space, ample warmth and sufficient sustenance. Now, if you will kindly step aside —"

"Get the hell off my property, you freeloading little bastards!" Jeff screamed and tried to close the door.

He didn't recognize the room right away because it was so huge. Then he saw that it was his boyhood bedroom. He was lying flat on his back on the floor, and towering above him, bright-red and terrifying, was the ladder. When the giant picked him up and positioned him so that his rigid outstretched arms rested across the two topmost nails, he tried to scream, but he couldn't, of course, being made of wood. All he could do was smile the silly smile that was painted on his face. He smiled it all the way down. *Clickety-click-click click!* He went right on smiling it throughout all his successive descents, still trying with all his might to scream, cringing inwardly from the malevolent expression on the giant's face.

At length the giant, becoming bored, held the ladder aloft before letting go of him. *Clickety-click-click!* He landed on his head so hard he saw stars. The malevolent expression on the giant's face intensified, became horrible to behold. He held the ladder higher yet. *Clickety-click-click-click!* It was Jeff's final descent.

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

Randall Garrett is a long-time F&SF contributor whose last story here was "The Final Fighting of Fion MacCumhaill," (September 1975). His new story concerns a slightly odd voyage at sea and the discovery of newly risen island.

The Horror Out of Time

by RANDALL GARRETT

It has been more than thirty years now since I saw that terrifying thing in the crypt-like temple, but I remember it as clearly, and with all the horror, as if I had seen it but an hour ago.

In those days twenty years before the turn of the century, the sailing ship still held sway over most of the world's waters; now, the steam-driven vessels cover in days distances that took months. All that no longer matters to me; I have not been abroad since I returned from that South Seas voyage, still weak from fever and delirium, over thirty years ago.

I think that before the end of this new century, scientific researchers will have proven as fact things which I already know to be true. What facts lie behind the mysteries of certain megalithic ruined cities found buried beneath the shifting sands on three separate continents? Are they merely the constructs of our prehistoric ancestors? Or are they much older than we know, the products of some primal race, perhaps from this planet, perhaps from another, far distant in space? The latter sounds wild, phantastick, perhaps even ... mad, but I believe it to be true, and mayhap this narrative will be of some service to those researchers who already suspect the truth. Long before our ancestors discovered the use of fire, even before they had evolved beyond animal form and intellect, there were beings of vast power and malignant intelligence who ruled supreme over this planet.

I have always been a person of leisure, spending my time in historical research, in reading books on philosophy, both natural and metaphysical, and in writing what I believe to be scholarly articles for various learned journals. When I was younger, I was more adven-

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

turous; I traveled a great deal, not only to read and research in the great universities of the world, but to do original research in hidden places of the earth, where few learned folk have gone. I was fearless then; neither the rotten foetidness of tropic jungles, nor the arid heat of harsh deserts, nor the freezing cold of polar regions daunted me.

Until the summer of my twenty-sixth year.

I was aboard the *White Moon,* sailing homeward through the South Seas, after having spent some months exploring the ancient ruins on one of the larger islands. (Their age can be measured in mere centuries; they have nothing to do with the present narrative.)

During the time I had been aboard, I had become quite friendly with Captain Bork, the commander of the three-masted vessel. He was a heavy-set, bluff, hearty fellow, an excellent ship's officer, and well-read in many subjects far divergent from mere nautical lore. Although self-educated, his behavior was that of one gently born, far above that of the common sailor of the day. He was perhaps a dozen years older than I, but we spent many an hour during the tedious journey discussing various subjects, and I dare say I learned as much from him as he learned from me. We became, I think, good friends.

One evening, I recall, we sat up rather late in his cabin, discoursing on daemonology.

"I'm not a superstitious chap, myself, sir," said he, "but I will tell you that there are things take place at sea that could never happen on land. Things I couldn't explain if I tried."

"And you attribute them to nonmaterial spirits, Captain?" I asked. "Surely not."

In the dim light shed by the oil lamp swinging gently overhead, his face took on a solemn expression. "Not spirits, perhaps, sir. No, not spirits exactly. Something ... else." I became interested. I knew the captain's sincerity, and I knew that, whatever he had to tell me, it would be told as he knew it to be.

"What, then, if not spirits?" I asked.

He looked broodingly out the porthole of his cabin. "I don't really know," he said slowly in his low, rumbling voice, staring out at the moonless sea-night. After a moment, he looked back at me, but there was no change in his expression. "I don't really know," he repeated. "It may be daemons or spirits or whatever, but it's not the feeling one gets in a graveyard, if you see what I mean. It's different, somehow. It's as if there were something down *there* —"

And he pointed straight down-

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

ward, as though he were directing my attention down past the deck, past the hull, to the dreadful black sea-bottom so far beneath. I could say nothing.

"*Way* down there," he continued solemnly. "There is something *old* down there — something old, but living. It is far older than we can know. It goes far back beyond the dawn of time. But it is there and it ... *waits*."

A feeling of revulsion came over me — not against the captain, but against the sea itself, and I realize that I, too, had felt that nameless fear without knowing it.

But of course I could not fall prey to that weird feeling. "Come, Captain," said I, in what I hoped was a pleasant tone, "this is surely your imagination. What intelligence could live at the bottom of the sea?"

He looked at me for a long moment, then his countenance changed. There was a look of forced cheerfullness upon his broad face. "Aye, sir, you're right. A person gets broody at sea, that's all. I fear I've been at sea too long. Have to take a long rest ashore, I will. I've been planning a month in port, and it'll rid me of these silly notions. Will you have another drink, sir?"

I did, and by the time I was in my own cabin, I had almost forgotten the conversation. I lay down in my bunk and went fast asleep.

I was awakened by the howling of the wind through the rigging. The ship was heaving from side to side, and I realized that heavy seas had overtaken her. From above, I heard the shouts of the captain and the first mate. I do not remember what they were, for I am not fully conversant with nautical terms, but I could hear the various members of the crew shouting in reply.

It was still dark, and, as it was summertime in the Southern Hemisphere, that meant that it was stll early. I hadn't the faintest notion of the time, but I knew I had not slept long.

I got out of my bunk and headed topside.

It is difficult, even now, for me to describe that storm. The sea was roiling like a thing alive, but the wind was almost mild. It shifted, now blowing one way, now another, but it came nowhere near heavy gale force. The *White Moon* swerved this way and that under its influence, as though we were caught in some monstrous whirlpool that changed its direction of swirl at varying intervals.

There were no clouds directly overhead. The stars shone as usual in every direction save the west, where one huge black cloud seemed to blot the sky. I heard the captain shout: "Get below, sir! Get below!

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

You're only a hindrance on deck! *Get below!*"

I was, after all no sailor, and he was master of the ship. So I went back to my cabin to wait the storm out. I know not how long that dreadful storm lasted, for there was no dawn that day. The enveloping cloud from the west had spread like heavy smoke, almost blocking out the sun, and the sky was still a darkling grey when the sea subsided into gentle swells. Shortly after it had done so, there was a rap at my cabin door.

"The captain would like to see you on deck, sir," said a sailor's rough voice from without.

I accompanied the sailor up the ladder to the weatherdeck, where Captain Bork was staring into the greyness abaft the starboard rail.

"What is it, Captain?" I inquired.

Without looking at me, he asked, "Do you smell that, sir?"

I had already perceived the stench which permeated the sea air about us. There was the nauseous aroma of rotting sea flesh combined with the acrid bitterness of burning sulfur. Before I could answer his question, the captain continued. "I caught that smell once before, many years ago," He turned to look at me. "Have you smelt it before, sir?"

"Once," I said. "Not exactly the same, Captain, but similar. It was near a volcano. But there was no smell of rotten fish."

Captain Bork nodded his massive head. "Aye, sir. That's the smell of it. Somewhere to the west —" He pointed toward the area where the black cloud was densest. " — there's been a volcanic explosion, the like of which we've not seen before. I knew it was no ordinary storm; this is not the season for typhoons."

"But what is that horrid miasma of decay?" I asked. "No volcano ever smelled like that."

Before the captain could answer a call came from the top of the mizzenmast. *"Land Ho-o-o!"*

Captain Bork jerked his head around and squinted toward the north. He thrust an arm out, pointing. "Land it is, sir," he said to me, "and that's where your stench comes from. The seas are shallow in these parts, but there should be no islands about. Look."

In the dim, wan light I saw a low, bleak headland that loomed above the surging surface of the sea.

I knew then what had happened. The volcanic eruption, and the resulting seismic shock, had lifted a part of the sea bottom above the surface. There before us, in black basalt, was a portion of the seabed which had been inundated for untold millennia. It was from that newly risen plateau that the revolt-

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

ing odor came, wafted by the gusting sea-breeze.

The captain began giving orders. There were certain repairs which had to be made, and he felt it would be better to have the ship at anchor for the work. So he directed that the ship be brought in close to the newly risen island. Not too close, of course; if another volcanic quake stirred the sea, he wanted leeway between the *White Moon* and those forbidding rocks.

He found water shallow enough to set the anchors, and the crew went to work with a will. The stench from the island, while mephitic enough, was not really strong, and we soon grew accustomed to it.

I was of no use whatever aboard and might well have gone to my cabin and stayed there while the crew worked, but there was something about that bleak, malodorous island that drew my attention powerfully. The ship was anchored roughly parallel to the beach, with the island to port. So I found a spot forward where I would be out of the way of the work and examined the island minutely with a spyglass I had borrowed from Captain Bork.

The island was tiny; one could have walked across it with no trouble at all, had it been level and even. But it would be much more difficult over that craggy, slippery black surface.

The close-up view through the spyglass only made the island look the more uninviting. Rivulets of sea water, still draining from the upper plateau, cut through sheets of ancient slime that oozed gelatinously down the precipitate slopes to the coral-crusted beach below. Pools of nauseous-looking liquid formed in pockets of dark rock and bubbled slowly and obscenely. As I watched, I became obsessed with the feeling that I had seen all this before in some hideous nightmare.

Then something at the top of the cliff caught my eye. It was something farther inland, and I had to readjust the focus of my instrument to see it clearly. For a moment, I held my breath. *It appeared to be the broken top of an embattled tower!*

It could not be, of course. I told myself that it was merely some chance formation of rock. But I had to get a better view of it.

I went in search of the captain and requested his permission to climb a little way up the rigging, so that my point of view would be above the top of the cliff. Busy as he was, he granted my request almost offhandedly. Up I went and used the spyglass once again.

The tower was plainly visible now. It appeared to be one of two, the second broken off much lower than the first. Both rose from one end of a rectangular block that might have been a partly buried

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

building, as if some great fortress, aeons old, still stood there.

Or was my overfervid imagination making too much of what, after all, was more likely to be a natural formation? I have often watched cloud formations take on weird and phantastic shapes as the wind shifts them across the sky; could not this be the same or a similar phenomenon? I forced my mind to be more objective, to look at the vista before me as it actually was, not as I might imagine it to be.

The spyglass showed clearly that the surface of that ugly, looming structure was composed of coral-like cells and small shellfish like those which cling to the bottoms of sea-going vessels when they have not been drydocked for too long a time. The edges of the building — if building it was — were rounded, and not angular. It could be merely a happenstance, a natural formation of rock which had been covered, over the millennia, by limeshell creatures which had given that natural structure a vague, blurred outline resembling an ancient fortress. Still, would not a genuine artifact of that size and shape have looked the same if it were covered with the same encrustations? I could not decide. Even after the most minute examination through the spyglass, I could not decide. There was but one thing to do, and so I approached the captain with my request.

"Go ashore?" Captain Bork said in astonishment. "No, sir, I could not allow that! In the first place, it is far too dangerous. Those rocks are slippery and afford too precarious a foothold. And look to the west; that volcano is still active; a second quake might submerge that island again as easily as the first raised it. In the second place, I cannot, at this time, spare the men to row you ashore in a longboat."

I had to make a firm stand. "Captain," said I, "surely you realize the tremendous scientific importance of this discovery. If that structure is, as I surmise, an artifact rather than a natural configuration of stone, the failure to investigate it would be an incalculable loss to science."

It required some little time to convince the captain, but after I had persuaded him to climb the rigging and look for himself, he conceded to my request, albeit grudgingly.

"Very well, sir, since you insist. Two of my crew will row you ashore. Since we are within easy hailing distance, they will return and work until you call. I cannot do more. I feel it is risky — no, more than that: it is downright foolhardy. But you are not a cub, sir; you have the right to do as you wish, no matter how dangerous." Then his stern countenance chang-

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

ed "To be honest, sir, I would come with you if I could. But my duty lies with my ship."

"I understand, Captain," said I. Actually, I had no desire for him to come ashore with me. At that time, I wanted to make any discovery that might be made by myself. If any glory were to be earned in that exploration, I wanted to earn it myself. How bitterly was I to repent that feeling later!

The "beach" — if such it could be called — was merely a slope of sharp coral permeated with stinking slime. I had had the good sense to dress properly in heavy boots and water-resistant clothing, but, close up, the nauseating odor was almost unbearable. Still, I had asked for it, and I must bear it.

The "beach" ended abruptly with a cliff nearly twice my own height, and I had to circle round to find a declivity I could negotiate.

Up I went, but it was hard going over those slippery, jagged rocks to the more level portion of the island.

I cannot, even now, describe the encroaching dread that came over me as I topped that rise and beheld the structure that squatted obscenely before me. Had I had less foolish courage, I might have turned, even then, and called back the longboat that was moving away, back toward the *White Moon.* But there was the matter of youthful pride. Having committed myself, I must go on, lest I be thought a coward by the captain and crew of that gallant ship.

I made my way carefully across that broken field of coral-covered basalt, but, try as I might, I could not avoid slipping now and then. More than once my feet slid into malodorous pools of ichthyic ooze. I would not care to take that walk today, for I am more brittle and my muscles are not as strong as they were then; even my younger, stronger self was fortunate that he did not break something.

Suddenly the going became easier. The area around that looming structure, some ten or twelve paces from the base of the wall, was quite level and covered with pebbles and fine sand rather than coral. But even up close those dripping, encrusted walls gave no clue as to whether they were natural or artificial. Slowly, carefully, I walked along the wall toward the east and, after thirty paces, turned the corner and continued north, along the shorter side of the structure. That eastern wall was as blank and unyielding of any evidence as the previous one had been. At the next corner I turned west and walked along the northern wall. It, too, looked exactly the same as the southern one. It was not until I came to the fourth side that I saw the opening.

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

I approached the breach in the wall with equal dread and fascination. Here, at last, I might find an avenue through which to reach the answers I sought. I paused at its edge, reluctant somehow to look inside. The way was difficult here, for a great stone slab lay flat on the sand, a mire-filled trench marking where it must have been resting upright for millennia, until the recent volcanic disturbance unbalanced and toppled it, unsealing the doorway before me.

There was no question remaining in my mind that it was indeed a doorway; a single fearful glance revealed a smooth, dry stone floor. Even in the wan grey light of the smoke-clouded day, an astounding fact was evident to me: that the mysterious structure was indeed an artifact constructed by intelligent beings and that until a few hours ago the stone slab at my feet had covered the doorway which surrounded me, sealing out the corrosive sea water.

The vapors which wafted from within were malodorous enough, but the stench was musty and dry. In spite of the strong sense of foreboding that was tugging at my heart and bowels, I could no longer contain my scientific curiosity. I slipped from my back the supply pack provided me by the captain and drew out the most bulky object, one of the ship's lamps. Beside the great slab of stone, I struggled with flint and steel to light the oily wick.

I recall clearly how I felt at that moment. The *White Moon* seemed aeons away, unreachable. I told myself that the excitement which made my body tremble was the incredible fortune of my find. That I should be at this place and time to avail myself of this unprecedented opportunity seemed miraculous. A different angle of course, a slightly stronger wind, the captain refusing flatly to have me escorted to these forbidding shores — any of these might have deprived me of the knowledge I was about to gain.

So I told myself then. But looking back, I know that I searched my mind for some rational reason for the lump of fear that seemed to choke me. For I am sure, now, that in my heart I already knew that what I had found would change my life in ways far different from the fortune and acclaim I tried so hard to believe I would receive.

The lamp finally caught, and its cheerful yellow light was most welcome. Braced up by its dancing glow, shielded within it from the baleful grey of the day, I walked into that ancient, long-hidden temple.

How did I know, immediately, that the large, shadow-shrouded room I entered had been a place of worship? I have tried, many times,

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

to understand what I sensed when I stepped through that doorway. I can describe it only as a many-particular presence, a malignant energy which swelled and eddied around me. And that energy was not random or undirected. It was focused far across the floor, against the far wall. The area was completely hidden from the brave little light of my oil lamp — to inspect it I would have to cross the great room.

Gone, now, was the brief impulse of bravado inspired by the lighting of the lantern. I moved across that endless room in the grip of a terror so profound that my mind was virtually paralyzed. I walked not through my own volition, but out of a reluctance to resist the pressure of that force which surrounded me, drawing me inexorably to the hidden area where I knew I would find an answer which I was becoming ever more certain *I did not want to find!*

The lamp swayed with my every step, casting inadequate illumination on the pillars that lined my path and causing fearsome shadows to billow out into the blankness beyond them. I could see symbols on the pillars: unintelligible, weird carvings which were somehow utterly repulsive and from which I looked quickly away. Now and then, the nether regions of the room would catch a ray of light and reveal drifts of dust, all that remained of wooden furniture or fabric wall-hangings. A part of me still stubbornly mourned the loss and surmised that the originals had been perfectly preserved until the advent of fresh air had accelerated their long-delayed decomposition. But that objective, scientific interest was almost totally submerged in a great relief that I was spared the scenes in those tapestries.

If those aspects of the huge room which I could see in the glow of my lantern contributed to a sense of apprehension, consider the effect of the vast areas which remained concealed. I began to fill the darkened corners with fancy. What lurked there, just beyond the light, watching me? Did I hear whispering in the gloom above me, or was it only the sea breeze becoming reacquainted with these aged stones? Surely the latter was true, for I could smell afresh, with sharpened senses, the foetid odor of the "beach." Or was this scent original within the temple, caused by the same sudden decay of once-living flesh as had struck the objects which had been reduced to dust?

For the first time in my young life, I cursed the imagination which had always enriched physical experience for me. If I persisted in conjuring specters to satisfy my straining senses ...

I saw the altar.

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

It rested atop a long, shallow stairway which stretched the whole width of the aisle. From where I was, I could see three steps, a long platform, and another set of three steps. At the end of that second platform stood a massive block, only a rectangular shape at the edge of the light.

I recognized that it functioned as an altar because I could now sense the exact focus of the energies which had drawn me across the room. On the wall above and behind the altar was an idol. Not even its vaguest outline was visible to me; yet I knew it was there and that when I looked upon it I would know the truth.

At that moment I looked back across the blackness at the patch of grey gloom that was the only doorway, the only way in ... or out. I knew that I had reached the only remaining moment of choice. To mount the first step toward the altar was to commit myself unremittingly to viewing what waited beyond it. I could turn back now, escape this dark and horrid place, return to the honest sunlight, however obscure.

But with my goal in sight, the hard stone step at the toe of my boot, I was shamed by the memory of my terrifying phantasies. I could not quite scoff at them, standing as I was almost within reach of what I could think of only as a *sacrificial* altar. But I argued with valid logic that the truth, whatever it might be, would dispell forever the lingering trauma of that fancy-ridden trek. So, with a grand and foolish determination, I turned and stepped upward.

As the altar loomed into the circle of light I carried with me, I could not repress a shudder of horror. Here was not the indestructible grey stone I had seen throughout the temple, but a giant block of scabrous white marble. Once smooth and gleaming, it had been etched and scarred by the elements of the air confined for — how long? — within these walls. The pattern of the marbled surface was lost beneath scattered patches that reflected an unhealthy white, as though some thin and pallid fungus were feeding on the evil, glistening stone.

I looked down at last upon the entire altar, and try as I did to resist, I was swept up in another eddy of phantasy. For what blasphemous rituals had this hideous altar been used? I could not shake the impression that living sacrifice had been offered here. In my mind's eye I could see a razor-sharp spearblade hovering ever nearer a terrified victim whose outline was blurred and unclear. And who — or what — held that threatening blade? Was this really only phantasy, or was I seeing a scene so

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

often repeated that its impression had remained these countless thousands of years?

I knew the moment had come. I lifted high my lantern and looked upon the thing to which the ancient sacrifice had been made.

The carven image on that wall was never meant for our eyes. I am the only person who has ever seen it, and time has not yet erased my sense of utter revulsion when the light of my lantern exposed it at last. Numbed by the horror of it, I stood as if paralyzed for what seemed an interminably long time; driven nearly mad by that ghastly visage, I threw the lamp at it with all my strength, as though I could destroy the sight of it. I must have screamed, but I can remember only the echoing of my boots as I ran back to the welcoming gloom of the still-dark day, fled for my soul's sake from that revolting and nauseous vision.

Past that, my memory is unclear. I retain an impression still of the total panic in my mind, as my body ran back across the sandy level to the noxious sea-scudded rocks. Some thankful instinct guided me toward the *White Moon.* The joy that surged through me when I saw her masts above the slimy crest that marked the edge of the "beach" is totally indescribable. Those masts represented safety, refuge, security. To my unbalanced mind they represented wholesomeness. All I need do, so my mind ran, was reach the *White Moon* — there I would find forgetfulness. It would be as though I had never set foot in that gruesome temple; it would never have happened at all. And how I longed to escape the memory of that place, of the indescribable horror that ruled over that dishonorable altar!

I ran for the *White Moon's* masts, slipping and falling, heedless of the dangerous coral which cut repeatedly at my extremites. With a soul-felt sob of relief, I ran straight over the edge of the crest and plummeted to the beach below.

I do not remember the pain; all I remember is the shock of the blow that knocked the breath out of me. And then, gratefully, I gave myself up to the sweet oblivion of unconsciousness.

I was told later that I was unconscious for two days and thus did not experience the second volcanic eruption and the resulting quake which allowed the merciful sea to flood over and cover again that horrid island and its tomblike temple.

Some infection from the coral cuts must have invaded my body, for I was in a fevered delirium for the next five days.

But, delirium or no, I did not imagine that carven figure above

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

that gruesome altar. No living thing has that much imagination, even in delirium.

I can still see it clearly in my mind's eye, although I would far rather forget it. It tells too much about the horrible and blasphemous rites which must have been performed in that evil place, rites practiced by monstrous beings that ruled this planet a quarter of a million or more years ago.

The hideous thing was almost indescribable, and I cannot, *will not,* bring myself to draw it. It was thin and emaciated-looking, with two tiny, deep-sunken eyes and a small mouth surrounded by some kind of bristles or antennae. The muscles were clearly visible, as though its flesh were all on the outside. It had only two arms, and these were flung wide. The horrible, five-fingered hands and the five-toed feet *were nailed firmly to a great stone cross!*

Coming Next month

Special All-British Issue

BRIAN W. ALDISS — "The Gulf and the Forest: Contemporary SF in Britain"
CHRISTOPHER PRIEST — "The Watchers," a novella
KEITH ROBERTS — "Adriadne Potts," novelet
JOHN BRUNNER — "The Man Who Understood Carboniferous Flora"
ROBERT AICKMAN — "Marriage"
KENNETH BULMER — "Psycho Sis"
RICHARD COWPER — "Drink Me, Francesca," novelet
IAN WATSON — "My Soul Swims In A Goldfish Bowl"
BRIAN W. ALDISS — "Three Ways"

The April issue is on sale March 2. Or send us the coupon on page 134.

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

ISAAC ASIMOV

Science

ANYONE FOR TENS

Occasionally I will write an article for F&SF that will accept, as a matter of course, the development of the Universe and life and man and brain by evolutionary processes. This is taken quietly by my F&SF audience.

Not so if I reach beyond to people not ordinarily exposed to such ideas. If I make similar assumptions in articles in *TV Guide*, for instance, I rouse the Bible Belt, and I am promptly bombarded with letters on the iniquity of evolutionary ideas or of *any* notions that are post-Biblical in nature (except for television sets, I presume).

At first, I would conscientiously try to send reasoned replies, and when it became clear that this was equivalent to trying to bail out the ocean with a spoon, I spent some time brooding on human folly. Then I decided that such brooding also got me nowhere, and so what I do now is glance over each letter for laughs before dumping it.

My favorite recent letter, coming in response to an article on the big bang theory of the origin of the Universe, began as follows:

"The trouble with you scientists is that you don't *observe*. If you only took the trouble to make the simplest observations you would see

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

at once that the Bible says, 'In the beginning God created the heaven and the earth.'"

Imagine scientists overlooking that key observation! And it is actually the first verse in the Bible! You would think it was impossible to miss.

It makes me feel sad that I must turn now to a mathematical topic concerning which there is no controversy and on which the Bible Belt makes no stand based on their superior powers of observation.

In last month's article I discussed exponents and explained that since $16 = 2 \times 2 \times 2 \times 2$ (four 2's multiplied together), it could be expressed as 2^4. Similarly $1/8 = 1/2 \times 1/2 \times 1/2$ and is therefore $(1/2)^3$ or 2^{-3}. Then, too, 2^0 (or any number to the zeroth power) is equal to 1. In a number like 2^4, the 4 is an exponent, the 2 is the base.

When two exponential numbers with the same base are multiplied, the exponents are added; when divided, the exponent of the divisor is subtracted from that of the dividend. Thus, $2^5 \times 2^3 = 2^8$ and $2^5 \div 2^3 = 2^2$.

I had ended last month's article by pointing out that you couldn't use whole number exponents to solve all multiplication and division problems, no matter which base you used. With all bases equally imperfect, was there nevertheless one that was superior to the others regardless of imperfection?

That is where matters stood, and with this super-quick recapitulation, we can now go on —

In order to decide among possible bases, let's list the values of some exponential numbers. Let's consider the bases from 2 to 10 and evaluate each for the exponents from 4 to -4, as in Table 1.

If we do this, we find our problem is solved at once. Anyone looking at Table 1 is bound to decide that a series of numbers like 10,000, 1,000, 100, 10 and 1 looks neater and easier to handle, than a series like 6,561, 829, 81, 9, and 1 or any of the others on the table do. The powers of 10 are "round numbers" — that is, they invariably have a lot of round-shaped digits, or 0's. This is not true for any of the others on the list.

If we went up through 11, 12, 13 and so on, we would find that if we used 20, 30, or 40 as a base, we would also get round figures, but in addition there would be digits other than 0's that could create trouble. For instance $30^5 = 24{,}300{,}000$ and $40^4 = 2{,}560{,}000$. The advantage of 10 as a base over these others is that when raised to any exponent, the only digits you will find in addition to all those 0's is a single 1, which is just as easy to handle as 0 is.

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

Table 1

exponent \ *base*	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
+4	16	81	256	625	1,296	2,401	4,096	6,561	10,000
+3	8	27	64	125	216	343	512	729	1,000
+2	4	9	16	25	36	49	64	81	100
+1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
0	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1
-1	1/2	1/3	1/4	1/5	1/6	1/7	1/8	1/9	1/10
-2	1/4	1/9	1/16	1/25	1/36	1/49	1/64	1/81	1/100
-3	1/8	1/27	1/64	1/125	1/216	1/343	1/512	1/729	1/1000
-4	1/16	1/81	1/256	1/625	1/1296	1/2401	1/4096	1/6561	1/10,000

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

The number 10 is not unique in this. If we use 100 or 1000 or any number of the sort, we will still get round numbers made up of 0's plus a single 1. Thus $100^3 = 1{,}000{,}000$ and $1{,}000^4 = 1{,}000{,}000{,}000{,}000$. However of all numbers of this sort, 10 is the smallest and that represents a great advantage.

Therefore 10 it is. It is 10 that is the common base for logarithms used in ordinary computation. (In calculus, another base is preferable to 10, and that is a number represented by "e." It is not an integer but a never-ending decimal with a value equal to 2.71828.... But that's another story.)

The usefulness of 10 is not because of any mystical property possessed by the number, however. It is entirely the result of the fact that we use a 10-based positional number system, which, in turn, is based on the anatomical accident that we happen to have five fingers on each of two hands. Had we evolved with four fingers on each hand, or six, we might well have developed an 8-based system of numeration or a 12-based one, and then 8 or 12 would have served as the most convenient base for calculations.

Suppose we take a closer look at exponential numbers to the base 10, as in Table 2.

Table 2

10^6	=	10 X 10 X 10 X 10 X 10 X 10	=	1,000,000
10^5	=	10 X 10 X 10 X 10 X 10	=	100,000
10^4	=	10 X 10 X 10 X 10	=	10,000
10^3	=	10 X 10 X 10	=	1,000
10^2	=	10 X 10	=	100
10^1	=	10	=	10

As you can see, when 10 is raised to an exponent that is a positive integer, the result is a 1 followed by as many 0's as is the value of the exponent. This is an invariable rule, again based on the nature of our number system and nothing else. We can be sure, therefore, that 10^7 is equal to a 1 followed by seven 0's, or 10,000,000 — or, in words, ten million. We don't have to go to the trouble of getting the product of seven 10's to be sure of this. In the same way 10^{33} is equal to 1,000,000,000,000,000,000,000,000,000,000,000 (one billion trillion trillion) and, if you have the patience, you can just as easily, in principle, write the value of $10^{2,347}$. (You can see the advantage of exponential expressions over ordinary numbers.)

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

Using this system, we have a new way of demonstrating that $10^0 = 1$, something that is not obvious on inspection. After all, 10^0 must be equal in value to a 1 followed by zero 0's, that is, to 1.

What about the negative exponents? We can always convert such exponentials into a unit fraction in which the denominator is what the number would be if the exponent were the equivalent positive form. Thus $10^{-4} = 1/10^4 = 1/10{,}000$ and $10^{-752} = 1/10^{752} = 1/100{,}000{,}0\ldots$ but you can write that out for yourself.

Fractions are, however, generally clumsy to work with, and it is much easier to play with decimals. If we were to convert all the fractions in Table 1 into decimals, we would see another reason why 10 is the best base for computations.

Consider the base, 2. In decimals, $2^{-1} = 1/2 = 0.5$; $2^{-2} = 1/4 = 0.25$; $2^{-3} = 1/8 = 0.125$ and $2^{-4} = 1/16 = 0.0625$. Each power has one or more non-0 digits and this introduces increasing complications.

If we consider the negative power of 3 in a decimal form, matters are even worse. Thus $3^{-1} = 1/3 = 0.333333\ldots$, a never-ending decimal. Then, $3^{-2} = 1/9 = 0.11111\ldots$; $3^{-3} = 1/27 = 0.0370370370\ldots$ and $3^{-4} = 1/81 = 0.1234567901234\ldots$ All the negative powers of 3 are never-ending decimals. (Again, mind you, this is only because we use a 10-based system of numbers. If we used a 9-based system, the negative exponents of 3 would be limited decimals and the negative exponents of 2 would be unending decimals.)

Consider the values of 10 raised to negative exponents. however. We have $10^{-1} = 1/10 = 0.1$; $10^{-2} = 1/100 = 0.01$; $10^{-3} = 1/1000 = 0.001$; $10^{-4} = 1/10{,}000 = 0.0001$ and so on.

All the negative exponents of 10, without exception, have values that are (in decimal form) round numbers built up of a number of 0's and a single 1, just as in the case of the positive exponents. The difference is that in the case of the negative exponents the 0's are to the left of the 1 rather than to the right, before it rather than behind it.

Again, the total number of 0's is equal to the value of the negative exponent, provided you remember, as a matter of convention, to include the one 0 to the left of the decimal point. Thus 10^{-8} is equal to 0.00000001 (eight 0's including the one to the left of the decimal point). Again 10^{-18} is equal to 0.000000000000000001, while I leave it to you to write the value of 10^{-3098} if you wish to.

Remember, as I said last month, that the exponents are logarithms. If

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

$10^2 = 100$, then 2 is the exponent to which 10 must be raised to give 100; another way of putting it is that the logarithm of 100 is 2. In the same way, since $10^4 = 10{,}000$, then the logarithm of 10,000 is 4; and since $10^{-3} = 0.001$, then the logarithm of 0.001 is -3.

In shorter form, we can say "log 100 = 2," "log 10,000 = 4," "log 0.001 = -3" and so on. In a sense we are just counting the 0's after the 1 for positive logs and before the 1 for negative logs.

Strictly speaking, we should say that "$\log_{10}100 = 2$," that is, the "logarithm to the base 10 of 100 is equal to 2." The base 10 is so nearly universally used in ordinary computations, however, that we just leave it out and assume that that's what it is. If, for any reason, we used any base other than 10, *then* we would have to indicate it. (Again "e" is an exception. If "e" is used as a base, we speak of "natural logarithm" and use the abbreviation "ln." This is still another story.)

Any computations involving the multiplication or division of powers of ten *only*, become a lot easier if we use logarithms. Thus, if we want to solve the problem 1,000,000 X 0.001 ÷ 100 X 10,000, we might easily get lost in the zeroes. Suppose instead that we substitute the logarithms, adding them at each multiplication and subtracting at each division.

The logarithm of 1,000,000 is +6, that of 0.001 is -3, that of 100 is +2 and that of 10,000 is +4. The problem is reduced, then, to (+6) + (-3) - (-2) + (+4), or 6 - 3 - 2 + 4, which is equal to +5. The answer, therefore is 100,000.

It looks complicated if you've never done it before, but if you get used to logarithms, it becomes second nature, and this system of adding and subtracting logarithms can cause you to forget how to do the problem by the ordinary rules of multiplication and division. (And good riddance, too.)

But how often do you deal with powers of ten only? Suppose you want to deal with the nearly similar problem of 2,300,000 X 0.0015 ÷ 120 X 30,500. What then?

If we knew the logarithms of each of these numbers we could proceed as before, so let's start with 2,300,000. What is the logarithm of 2,300,000? In other words, 10 must be followed by what exponent to yield 2,300,000.

If we confine ourselves to whole-number exponents, there is no answer, for $10^6 = 1{,}000{,}000$ and $10^7 = 10{,}000{,}000$ and 2,300,000 is somewhere in between. Or we can say that log 1,000,000 = 6, log 10,000,000 = 7,

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

and log 2,300,000 must be some fractional value between 6 and 7.

But how can you have some fractional log? It is equivalent to a fractional exponent, to the raising of 10 to a fractional power. It is easy to understand what 10^6 or 10^7 is, but what the heck is, let us say, $10^{6.362}$?

Let's be systematic about it. To begin with, let's write all numbers as much as possible in powers of ten. For instance, 2,300,000 can be written as 230,000 X 10, or as 230 X 1,000, or as 0.23 X 10,000,000, and so on. There are an infinite number of possibilities, but it is neatest if we agree to have the "non-round" portion of the number, the part that is not a power of 10, fall in the range between 1 and 10. If we follow that rule, we can write 2,300,000 as 2.3 X 1,000,000 or as 2.3 X 10^6.

The other numbers in the problem that begins this section can then be rewritten as follows:

$0.0015 = 1.5 \times 0.001 = 1.5 \times 10^{-3}$

$120 = 1.2 \times 100 = 1.2 \times 10^2$

$30{,}500 = 3.05 \times 10{,}000 = 3.05 \times 10^4$

Once you get enough practice thinking of numbers in this fashion, it becomes second nature. It actually becomes easier, eventually, and makes more sense, to think of a number as 1.2 X 10^2 rather than as 120. In fact, to keep the system uniform, there is value in thinking of 100 not as 10^2 but as 1 X 10^2, and it becomes easier to work with that (believe it or not) than with 100.

The problem at the start of the section then becomes 2.3 X 10^6 X 1.5 X $10^{-3} \div 1.2 \times 10^2 \times 3.05 \times 10^4$. The exponential part of the problem can be worked out by just adding and subtracting exponents and, at a glance (if you've had practice), you see that that part of the answer is 10^5, so that the problem reduces to $2.3 \times 1.5 \div 1.2 \times 3.05 \times 10^5$.

It doesn't seem to make the problem any easier, because we've just gotten rid of a lot of 0's which aren't really troublesome except for possible mistakes in counting. By taking out the zeroes exponentially, we have done what is usually referred to as "locating the decimal point."

Now all we have to do is to work out the logarithms of the numbers between 1 and 10 and we're home free. Unfortunately, that still represents an infinite set of numbers. Even if we succeed in getting the logarithms of 2, 3, 4, 5, 6, 7, 8 and 9, we still have to get all decimals between, numbers such as 2.1 and 3.45 and 8.112 and so on. Unending!

Since $10^0 = 1$ and $10^1 = 10$, all the infinite array of numbers between 1 and 10 must have exponents (and therefore logs) that lie between 0 and

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

1, and we still have to learn the meaning of a fractional exponent. Suppose we begin with an exponent of 1/2 or, as it can also be written, 0.5. What is the meaning of an expression such as $10^{1/2}$ or $10^{0.5}$?

We know that if we multiply two exponential numbers with the same base, we must add the exponents; therefore $10^{1/2} \times 10^{1/2} = 10^1 = 10$. This means that $10^{1/2}$ represents some number which, when multiplied by itself, gives us 10. Such a number has long been defined as the "square root" of 10. Thus, 5 is the square root of 25, since $5 \times 5 = 25$; 1.6 is the square root of 2.56, since $1.6 \times 1.6 = 2.56$; and so on.

The square root isn't always an integer or a simple decimal. In fact, it hardly ever is. It is usually an unending decimal, but you don't need all the infinite set of digits in the decimal to have a useful decimal. If you have a few places, you have a square root you can work with, and it isn't very difficult to calculate the square root of any number to a few places.

Never mind the details, but the square root of 10 is 3.162... If we take the simple decimal 3.162 as the square root we see that $3.162 \times 3{,}162 = 9.998244$. That's not exactly 10, but it is close enough for many purposes.

We know, then, that $10^{1/2} = 3.162$ (just about). Conversely, we know that log 3.162 = 0.5 (just about).

Similarly, $10^{1/3}$ is equal to the cube root of 10 since $10^{1/3} \times 10^{1/3} \times 10^{1/3} = 10^1$. The cube root of 10 can be calculated to be about 2.154; therefore $10^{1/3}$ is just about equal to 2.154 and lot 2.154 = 0.333 (just about).

Again, $10^{2/3}$ is equal to the cube root of 100, since $10^{2/3} \times 10^{2/3} \times 10^{2/3} = 10^2$. Since the cube root of 100 is about equal to 4.642, we know that the log of 4.642 is about equal to 0.667.

We might go on and point out that $10^{1/4}$ is the fourth root of 10 or the square root of $10^{1/2}$ or the square root of 3.162; that $10^{3/4}$ is the fourth root of 1,000, and so on.

Mathematicians have other ways of calculating logarithms, but we don't have to be concerned with that. The point I have tried to demonstrate is simply that fractional exponents, and therefore fractional logarithms, *do* have meaning and that, in principle, the logarithm to the base 10 (or to *any* base, for that matter) can be calculated for *any* number.

Logarithms (with inconsiderable exceptions) are, like square roots, unending decimals; but they can be calculated, in principal, to any number of places, given time. Five places is usually adequate. Thus the logarithms for the integers from 1 to 10 are given in Table 3 to five places; the logarithms for the tenth-numbers between 3 and 4 are given in Table 4; and

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

Table 3

Number	*Logarithm*
1	0.00000
2	0.30103
3	0.47712
4	0.60206
5	0.69897
6	0.77815
7	0.84510
8	0.90309
9	0.95424
10	1.00000

the logarithms for the hundredth-numbers between 3.2 and 3.3 are given in Table 5. Each of these is an example of a small section of a log table, which I referred to in the introduction to last month's article.

Now let's return to our problem, which was $2.3 \times 1.5 \div 1.2 \times 3.05 \times 10^5$.

Using a log table (a real one, not the small samples I've given you in this article), we find that:

$\log 2.3 = 0.36173$
$\log 1.5 = 0.17609$
$\log 1.2 = 0.07918$
$\log 3.05 = 0.48430$

We add and subtract logarithms instead of multiplying and dividing

Table 4

Number	*Logarithm*
3.0	0.47712
3.1	0.49136
3.2	0.50515
3.3	0.51851
3.4	0.53148
3.5	0.54407
3.6	0.55630
3.7	0.56820
3.8	0.57978
3.9	0.59106
4.0	0.60206

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

Table 5

Number	*Logarithm*
3.20	0.50515
3.21	0.50651
3.22	0.50786
3.23	0.50920
3.24	0.51055
3.25	0.51188
3.26	0.51322
3.27	0.51455
3.28	0.51587
3.29	0.51720
3.30	0.51851

the corresponding numbers, which means we convert the problem to 0.36173 + 0.17609 - 0.07918 + 0.48430 and that comes out to 0.94294.

We can use the log table to find out what number has the logarithm 0.94294 and the answer turns out to be very nearly 8.769. The answer to our problem is then, just about 8.769×10^5, or 876,900.

It may seem that using a log table is more trouble than it's worth. First, there's all that looking up of logarithms and copying them down (and making a mistake, possibly, at either step). Then we have to add and subtract numbers in five decimal places, which is tedious in itself. Wouldn't it have been simpler to go through the multiplications and divisions instead?

You're welcome to try the multiplications and divisions in the problem I've given just to see how simple it would be to do so, and please remember that this problem is a rather simple one. If the problem were more complicated and if there were a great many of them to do, you would settle for a log table soon enough. When Johann Kepler was trying to calculate out the orbit of the planet Mars, working with numerous observations and dealing with vast and repetitious multiplications and divisions, his lifetime would not have been enough to carry them all through without error — were it not for the recent invention of logarithms.

To avoid the most tedious aspects of logarithms, however, the English mathematician, William Oughtred, invented the slide-rule in 1622. The principle here involves the sliding of one straight-edge against another, each ruled off with numbers spaced carefully and identically. This enables you to add lengths equivalent to the value of the numbers and to attain the sum mechanically (or the difference).

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

If the numbers from 1 to 10 were spaced equally along each straight-edge, and the tenths and hundredths were likewise, you'd be making a straightforward addition or subtraction. What Oughtred did, however, was to space the numbers, not equally, but in proportion to the value of their logarithms. For this reason the space between 1 and 2 is considerably greater than that between 2 and 3, which is in turn greater than that between 3 and 4 and so on. If you look at a slide rule you will see that the higher numbers seem to squeeze together. This reflects the fact that the logarithms increase by smaller amounts as you go up the scale of digits (see Table 3).

If you can then slide one straight-edge against the other, you are not adding or subtracting lengths equivalent to the values of the numbers, but equivalent to the value of the logarithms of the numbers. You are, in effect, adding or subtracting logarithms and, therefore, multiplying or dividing numbers.

If you use the slide-rule constantly, you get very practiced at manipulating it, and you can slide the central piece back and forth, solving problems such as 2.3 X 1.5 ÷ 1.2 X 3.05 in just a few seconds. I'm badly out of practice, and I'm not very deft with my hands even when in practice, but I solved that problem on the slide-rule in 18 seconds and found the answer to be about equal to 8.77. Remembering that I must multiply this by 10^5, I find the answer to the problem we've been working with in this article to be 877,000. Now I have two answers: 876,900 by the use of log tables and 877,000 by the use of the slide rule. Which is correct?

Actually, neither, but the log table answer is more nearly correct. The trouble is that with a slide-rule of ordinary length (10 inches) it is just possible to get three decimal places, while with the log tables one commonly finds it is easy to get four decimal places.

FREE F&SF COVER PRINT

The subscription coupon on the next page will bring you a free, full-color print of an exceptional F&SF cover by Bonestell, Hunter or Walotsky. These are not press proofs; they are a special small run of prints on quality, heavy stock. There is no overprinting, and they are suitable for framing. You may use the coupon to enter a new subscription or extend your current sub. The coupon is backed by this copy, and removal does not affect the text of the surrounding story.

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

The slide rule tends to give you a poorer answer, but it gives it to you much more quickly. The tendency, then, is to use a slide rule for quick approximate results, and to turn to a log table only when unusual accuracy is desired.

But then along comes a pocket computer which manipulates little flashes of electric current in such a way as to mimic the processes of addition and subtraction. Then, by repeated additions and subtractions in tiny fractions of a second, it performs the processes of multiplication and division. — Even a very cheap pocket computer, such as mine, can do this.

I punch the necessary figures into it and in 12 seconds (I'm not very deft, remember, or it would take less time) find that 2.3 X 1.5 ÷ 1.2 X 3.05 = 8.76875. Multiplying that by 10^5, we get the answer to the original problem as 876,875, which is exact. The problem was solved more quickly than by the slide-rule and more exactly than by a five-place log table, so who needs either?

In fact, we don't even have to take out the exponential parts of the numbers (if we only make sure that we don't put in more 0's than the particular computer is equipped to hold) so that the pocket computer even locates the decimal point for us.

On my computer I punch 2,300,000, then the multiplication sign, then the 0.0015, then the division sign (partial answer, 3,450), then 120, then the multiplication sign (partial answer, 28.75), then 30,500, then the equals sign, and the final answer is 876,875.

Now you know why I had to retire my faithful slide-rule after twenty years of exemplary service — and why slide-rules aren't manufactured any more.

.....

Mercury Press, Inc., Box 56, Cornwall, Conn. 06753
Enter my subscription to F&SF, and rush me a free cover print.
I enclose ☐ $12.50 for one year; ☐ $30.00 for three years.

3-8

Please print

Name .....

Address .....

City ..... State ..... Zip # .....

Canadian and foreign postage: add $2.00 per year.
Please allow six weeks for delivery of first copy.

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

Papa Schimmelhorn, the lecherous genius of New Haven, made his last appearance here in "The Ladies of Beetlegoose Nine." (October 1976). In this hilarious new episode, Papa receives a visit from his grand-nephew Little Anton and finds himself recruited into a mission to an anti-gravity universe, in search of dragons and pussycats . . .

Papa Schimmelhorn's Yang

by R. BRETNOR

It was no coincidence that Little Anton returned from Hongkong to New Haven on the very afternoon that Papa Schimmelhorn finished installing his anti-gravity device under the hood of his 1922 Stanley Steamer touring car. For a week, Papa Schimmelhorn had been in deep disgrace, if not with fortune and men's eyes at least with Mama Schimmelhorn, his employer Heinrich Luedesing, Mrs. Luedesing, Pastor Hundhammer, and two deacons of the pastor's church, all of whom had caught him *in flagrante* very much *delicto* with a a part-time soprano named Dora Grossapfel up in the choir loft, where they themselves certainly had no business being on a lovely, warm Tuesday afternoon in June.

Old Heinrich, assuming a high moral tone, had suspended him for a fortnight from his job as foreman at the Luedesing Cuckoo Clock Factory. Mama Schimmelhorn, much less formally, had pried him off Ms. Grossapfel with her stiff black umbrella and had then applied it vigorously to both of them. Ms. Grossapfel had ruined her mascara by weeping piteously, and Mrs. Luedesing, mistakenly, had taken her for the victim either of rape or of seduction. Then Mama Schimmelhorn had led him home ignominiously by the ear, prodding him all the way with the umbrella, and hissing, "At more than eighty years — ach! Dirty old man! Now you shtay in der haus. Nefer again I let you loose all by yourself!"

So he had retreated to his basement workshop and to the more congenial company of his old striped tomcat, Gustav-Adolf, whose tastes and instincts were much like his own, and had devoted several days to assembling and installing the curious miscellany of valves, gears, tubing, solenoids, and

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

oddly formed ceramics which, in and around a device resembling (though only when you looked at it correctly) the illegitimate offspring of a translucent Klein bottle, constituted the functioning heart of his invention.

The job done, he fired up the boiler and stood over it while it produced a proper head of steam. "*Ach,* Gustav-Adolf," he exclaimed, "how nice it iss I am a chenius! Imachine — no vun else knows dot for anti-grafity you must haff shteam, instead of elecdricity vhich gets in der vay. Und I myself do not know vhy, because it iss all in mein subconscience, chust as Herr Doktor Jung told me in Geneva vhen I vas chanitor at der Institut fur High Physics."

"Mrreow!" replied Gustav-Adolf, looking up from his saucer of dark beer on the cluttered Schimmelhorn workbench.

"Dot's right, und predty soon ve see how it vorks." Papa Schimmelhorn made some fine adjustments and peered at the steam gauge on the dashboard. He closed the hood and clamped it down. "Zo, ve are ready!" he exclaimed. Thinking of Dora Grossapfel's plump behind under easily removable stretch-pants, he climbed into the driver's seat. "*Ach,* such a pity, Gustav-Adolf! Imachine, my nice Dora among der predty clouds maybe at two thousand feet!" Heaving a sigh, he eased back gently on a sort of joystick he had installed where an ordinary car's gearshift lever would have been, and silently the Stanley Steamer began to rise — six inches, a foot, two feet. He turned the lever's handle left, then right, and the car turned with it. He tipped the nose up and then down. "*Wunderschon!* How do they say vith shtupid rockets! — all systems are go. Und now, Papa, all you do is vait vhile Mama simmers down, und vunce again ve chase die predty pussycats —"

In the background, a chorus of cuckoo-clocks began to sing the hour of twelve — and at that instant Little Anton, having parked his Mercedes 300-SL just around the corner, knocked at the basement's garage door.

"Vot iss!" Papa Schimmelhorn brought the car down to a gentle four-point landing, mentally reviewing the dames and damsels who, knowing that Mama was away for the day, might be expected to pay him a surreptitious visit.

The knocking was repeated, more emphatically. "I say!" called Little Anton. "It's me, your grand-nephew! Do let me in!"

"Lidtle Anton!" cried Papa Schimmelhorn, dismounting. "How nice you are back from die Chinesers, but your voice iss different in der accent. Vot has happened?"

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

"I've been listening to BBC, old boy. Open up, and I'll tell you all about it."

"Donnerwetter, der door iss locked und Mama has der key!"

Little Anton chortled. "Don't tell me a genius like you couldn't pick that stupid lock. You just don't want Mama to get any angrier. Well, all right then —"

In his mind's eye, Papa Schimmelhorn could see Little Anton crossing his eyes preliminary to reaching around the dimensional corner into that private universe to which only he had access. He waited. A moment later there was the click of tumblers and the door swung open.

"Lidtle Anton!" boomed Papa Schimmelhorn, embracing him and standing back again for a better view. "How you haff changed!"

And indeed Little Anton no longer was the callow youth who had left New Haven to seek his fortune when the sudden obsolescence of the Wilen scanner caused the Federal axe to fall, putting an end to young Woodrow Luedesing's dreams of industrial empire. He was perhaps a little plumper than before, but his smooth, pink features showed no signs of acne, his adolescent awkwardness had vanished, and he was attired, not in the rough, ill-fitting clothing he had worn from Switzerland, but in a creamy suit of fine Italian silk, shoes of the sort ordinarily afforded only by motion picture magnates and the Mafia, a pale silk shirt, an Old Etonian tie, and a gem-jade ring of the finest quality.

"Ja!" Papa Schimmelhorn shook his head admiringly. "Chust like mein own son, a chip from der old block!"

"Quite right, Great-uncle," replied Little Anton. "As you know, I'm a chenius too." From his sealskin wallet he took a business card.

Papa Schimmelhorn read it. *Pêng-Plantagenet, Ltd.,* it said in English and Chinese, *Hongkong, London, Paris, Brussels, Rome, New York, Singapore, Tokyo, and throughout the world,* and in a corner, modestly but decisively, *Anton Fledermaus, Director of Special Services.*

"That," said Little Anton, his new accent slipping for a moment, "means I head up their department of dirty tricks. It's a real tough job, Pop. We're the biggest conglomerate in the world, so *everybody's* trying to shaft us — Commies, Arabs, Japanese, you name it. I'm the chap who makes sure we keep ahead of them." He smirked. "I manage."

He related how Pêng-Plantagenet had hired him, promoted him, provided him a penthouse atop one of Hongkong's most expensive high-rises, and enabled him to learn not only better English

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

but fluent Cantonese and Mandarin. "Yes," he said smugly, *"I've* changed, but —" He regarded Papa Schimmelhorn's huge stature, mighty muscles, and great white beard. "—you haven't changed a bit."

"Of course nodt!" boomed Papa Schimmelhorn. "Chunior, I tell you how to keep der vinegar vhen you are old — only by chasing predty pussycats!"

"Mrreow!" agreed Gustav-Adolf emphatically.

"Und dot's nodt all — der old man shtill makes new lidtle tricks —" he gestured at the Stanley Steamer. "— I haff now an infention no vun else has made. Vait, und I show you —"

"I know," said Little Anton. "Anti-gravity. That's why I'm here."

"What? How did you find out?"

"You can hide nothing from Pêng-Plantagenet."

"But only Mama knows —"

"And maybe a few dozen pretty little pussycats," said Little Anton, saying nothing about the affectionate and informative letters Mama Schimmelhorn had been writing him. "Anyhow, anti-gravity's something Pêng-Plantagenet can use. Who do you think worked up this big church social Mama's gone to? Who fixed it so there'd be lots of vodka in their punch. Papa, you're hired. We leave for Hongkong right away."

"But — I do nodt vant a chob!" Papa Schimmelhorn protested. "I haff chust fixed der Stanley Shteamer, und I haff nodt yet taken my Dora for a ride."

"Look, you take off in that thing, and the Air Force is sure to shoot you down. Anyhow, Pêng-Plantagenet's hiring both of you — your car too."

"But I haff no passport!"

Little Anton smiled an Old Etonian smile. He reached into his pocket and pulled a passport out. "Oh, yes, you have. You're now a subject of Her Majesty the Queen. Like me. I guess you *still* don't get it — Pêng-Plantagenet can fix *anything."*

"Nein, I cannot leafe. Mama is already angry! If I go to Hongkong —" Papa Schimmelhorn shuddered at the thought.

There was a moment of silence. Then, "Papa," said Little Anton, "come outside and let me show you something."

Papa Schimmelhorn nodded grudgingly. "Okay," he grumbled, "but shtill I cannot go."

He followed Little Anton out of the basement and around the corner. There stood the sleek Mercedes, painted an Imperial yellow, complete with Hongkong license plates.

"Pêng-Plantagenet flew it here with me," declared Little Anton

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

proudly. "But you've seen nothing yet—"

He threw the door open, and instantly a great change came over Papa Schimmelhorn. His blue eyes widened; his whiskers quivered; something began to rumble in his throat. *"Pussycats!"* he exclaimed. *"Predty pussycats!"*

"From Pêng-Plantagenet," said Little Anton. "Nothing but the best." And he introduced Miss Kittikool (which he explained was her real name), a demure, ninety-five pound, nicely rounded package from Thailand, and a slightly larger but no less attractive Miss MacTavish, half Scotch and half Chinese, from Hongkong.

Papa Schimmelhorn swept them a splended bow. He kissed their hands. He rumbled happily while they giggled and pulled his beard and marvelled at his muscles.

"Lidtle Anton," he announced, "I haff changed mein mind. This vunce I go to vork for Pêng-Panflageolet. Mama vould nodt beliefe me, so you must leafe a note. Tell her I go only to make a lot of money so she can buy new dresses, maybe a new umbrella. You vait a minute vhile I change."

"Good show, Papa!" Little Anton slapped him heartily on the back. "I knew you'd come through in the pinch." And the pretty pussycats carolled their own pleasure at the news.

Fifteen minutes later, he rejoined them, gloriously attired in a striped blazer with brass buttons, loudly checked trousers, an orange sports shirt, and open sandals. Then, after he had been cautioned on no account to attempt a takeoff, and after his grand-nephew had mysteriously relocked the garage door, he guided the Stanley Steamer, gleaming in its freshly polished British Racing Green, into line behind the Mercedes, having insisted only that Miss Kittikool ride with him.

All the way to the airport, he decorously drove with all four wheels on the ground, and with one hand less decorously exploring those inviting areas of her thigh accessible through the slit of her sea-green Chinese gown. A new and splended jet awaited them, also painted Imperial yellow. As they approached, it extruded a wide ramp and, while the crew saluted, Little Anton unhesitatingly drove aboard, beckoning his great-uncle to follow him. But Papa Schimmelhorn by this time was so exhilarated that he was unable to resist the temptation to fly the steamer straight into the door, a sight which subsequently sent two of the ground-control men to the psychiatrist.

As they entered the luxurious

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

cabin, Little Anton nudged him covertly. "Would you like to know why Pêng-Plantagenet sent us all the way from Hongkong for you, Papa?" he whispered in his ear. "It's not just because of your anti-gravity device — it's because of your big *yang*."

"My *vhat?* Lidtle Anton, vhat are you saying? Und right in front of predty pussycats!"

"Don't worry," chuckled Little Anton. "It isn't what you think. Mr. Pêng'll explain the whole thing. He'll tell you all about Black Holes and dragons, and how your *yang* fits in with antigravity."

On that flight to Hongkong, Papa Schimmelhorn enjoyed himself so thoroughly that he completely forgot his curiosity regarding Black Holes, dragons, his *yang*, and anti-gravity and was able to devote all his energies to Miss Kittikool and Miss MacTavish, both of whom agreed that he was unique in their experience; and even next day, during his first interview with Horace Pêng and Richard Plantagenet in their teak and sandalwood panelled offices on the thirty-third floor of the Pêng-Plantagenet Building, he found it difficult to concentrate on scientific matters.

Mr. Pêng was a majestic, immaculately groomed Chinese with gray hair and an Oxford accent. His suit spoke of Savile Row, his tie of Brasenose College. Mr. Plantagenet was a very tall, immaculately groomed Englishman with a medieval moustache, a bold Norman nose, an Oxford accent and a Brasenose tie. They greeted Papa Schimmelhorn with great cordiality, apologized because the press of business had kept them from meeting him at the airport, and inquired as to whether Little Anton's provisions for his comfort and entertainment had been adequate.

Papa Schimmelhorn, recalling how cozy bed had been with Miss Kittikool on one side and Miss MacTavish on the other, rolled his eyes and assured them fervently that their hospitality was absolutely *wunderbar*. "Chentlemen," he roared, "I tell you, it makes me feel like I am vunce again a young shqvirt, full of vinegar!"

"What did I tell you, sir?" whispered Little Anton to Mr. Pêng.

Mr. Pêng nodded, looking highly pleased, and Mr. Plantagenet harrumphed with approval.

"Mr. Schimmelhorn," began Mr. Pêng, "we badly need your help. Expense will be no object. You will be rewarded richly —"

"Revarded? Don't you vorry. I haff a good chob vith old Heinrich, making cuckoo-clocks, und here in Hongkong I am hafing fun, zo I am

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

glad to help. Also, bedter you call me Papa instead of Mr. Schimmelhorn, und I call you maybe Horace, und your friend, whose name somevhere I haff heard before, I call Dick."

Mr. Plantagenet chuckled, and Mr. Pêng inclined his head gravely. "Papa," he said, "your years and genius give you the right to choose the terms of address we shall use between us. Now I shall explain briefly the sort of assistance we require from you."

"Lidtle Anton has told you I am shtupid und a chenius only in der subconscience?"

"He has indeed informed us how your genius functions, but that is not important." Mr. Pêng leaned forward. "Papa, do you understand all the implications of your development of an anti-gravity device? True anti-gravity is no simple Newtonian force. It bears the same relationship to normal gravity as anti-matter does to ordinary matter."

Two charming Balinese girls came in silently, dressed in their native costume and carrying trays of tiny sandwiches and tall, cold drinks, and Papa Schimmelhorn's eyes and mind began to wander, but Mr. Pêng paid no attention. "This means," he said, "that only from an anti-matter universe can *pure* anti-gravitic forces be derived — and that you, somehow, have reached into such a universe. Now, there are three ways of making contact with the many universes contiguous with ours. One is by the use of parapsychological powers, like those so highly developed in your excellent grand-nephew. Another, which so far at least has been impossible, is by generating physical forces vast enough to manipulate those awesome phenomena called Black Holes, which come into being with the final collapse of a star or galaxy, and from which not even light can escape. Black Holes are themselves portals into anti-matter universes, where we believe anti-gravity originates. You understand?"

"*Ja,*" said Papa Schimmelhorn. "Like shvincters."

Mr. Pêng did not contradict him. "The third way," he continued, "which actually was known and used in India and China in ancient times, is by combining the first and second, and this you seemingly have used."

Papa Schimmelhorn pinched the two Balinese girls as they went by, but Mr. Pêng, thoroughly briefed by Little Anton was in no way annoyed. "Putting it roughly," he declared, "our own universe has become primarily a *yang* universe; otherwise Black Holes could not exist in it. At the other extreme, we would find *yin* or anti-matter universes. *Yang* and *yin,* the male

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

and female principles, are the fundamental principles of all creation. Always they must balance; neither must preponderate too greatly over the other. When they are unbalanced, there is all sorts of trouble, from social unrest to Black Holes."

"How nice!" marvelled Papa Schimmelhorn. "Zo now I am der *yang* and maybe die lidtle topless pussycats und Miss Kittikool vill be die *yin*. Und I haff used my *yang* to make der dingus vork, efen if I don't know vhy?"

"Precisely," said Mr. Plantagenet. "Very neatly put, old chap. Couldn't have phrased it more delicately myself."

"You have indeed used your *yang* to make it work," Mr. Pêng went on. "You have used it to capture a Black Hole, conveniently a very small one, which now appears to be perfectly controlled within that Klein bottle affair in your car. This cannot safely give us access directly to a *yin* universe, but it may enable us to build a portal into another continuum, one which in ancient days was in constant communication with us and with which Richard and I are most anxious to reestablish contact, for in it *yang* and *yin* are in perfect balance. This portal we will ask you to design —"

"Okay," said Papa Schimmelhorn, "I vill try."

"But before I continue —" Mr. Pêng paused portentously. "— I want your firm assurance that no word of our project shall get out, either to the world at large, or to your wife, and most especially — this I cannot emphasize too strongly because in due course you will meet them — either to Mrs. Plantagenet or Mrs. Pêng. They are — well, they're not in full sympathy with what Richard and I have in mind. What I am about to tell you, you may find very difficult to believe. You have heard of dragons, have you not?"

"St. Cheorge und Fafnir und die chewels und die predty Rheinmadchen?"

Mr. Pêng suppressed a shudder. "Ah, yes," he said, "But those are not dragons as we in China knew them. You see, dragons came to us from the special universe of which I spoke, a virtual mirror-image of what ours used to be. They are beneficent and very wise, and while they lived with us, in the days of the great Yellow Emperor, all China flourished. Then the decline of virtue, and especially the coarse anti-dragon sentiment in Europe, caused their complete withdrawal. You have only to look at the state of the world today to understand the consequences. I most especially am concerned. You see, Richard and I are not merely conglomerate taipans. For more than two

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

millennia, my ancestors have been mandarins of the highest rank, and Hereditary Keepers of the Imperial Dragon Hatchery. For more than two millennia we have maintained our tradition, with all the appropriate ceremonies and sacrifices, in the hope that our dragons would return to us. You do believe me, don't you?"

"Vhy nodt?" said Papa Schimmelhorn. "If gnurrs come from der voodvork out, vhy nodt dragons?"

"Good. That explains my interest in the project. As for Richard, whom I met during our Oxford days, his motivation is quite as strong as mine. He is descended directly from another Richard Plantagenet, known as the Lion Hearted, and he is the rightful King of England —"

"Your Machesty —" murmured Papa Schimmelhorn politely.

"Thank you," said His Majesty. "Yes, after we became friends Horace explained the influence of dragons on our history. All that dreadful St. George nonsense, and the other horrible myths and fairy tales. I at once saw the role they'd played in enabling the usurpation of our throne. Not that I have anything against the present usurper, who seems to be a very decent sort of woman, but I do want to set the matter right, you know. That's simple justice, isn't it? Besides, Horace and I have all sorts of plans. We shall reestablish the Chinese and British Empires. No one will be able to stand against us. My dear Papa, we shall rule the world!"

"Very much to its advantage," said Mr. Pêng. "But that's beside the point. We've scheduled seminars for you with our foremost scientists and scholars — seminars which, I assure you, will not interfere with your — er, relaxation. They'll work with you until your intuition tells you you have the problem solved. In the meantime, Mr. Fledermaus and our Chief of Security, Colonel Li, will see that you have everything you want." He and Mr. Plantagenet stood up just as a tall and very military Chinese strode into the room. "Here's Colonel Li now."

The Colonel was middle-aged, but there was nothing soft about him.

"Gott in Himmel!" exclaimed Papa Schimmelhorn, as they shook hands. "Vot iss? Anoder Chenghiz Khan?"

"I do my best," Colonel Li answered modestly. Then, to Papa Schimmelhorn's surprise, he grinned. "My friend Anton tells me you're a man after my own heart. I too am fond of cats."

"That's right," declared Little Anton. "He knows every pretty little pussycat in Hongkong, and believe me, Papa, you'll be safe as

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

long as he's around, no matter where, no matter what."

For the next two weeks, Papa Schimmelhorn enjoyed himself tremendously. In the late mornings and early afternoons, usually with the two pretty little Balinese on his lap, he endured lectures by a Swedish physicist, a Brazilian physicist, an impatient Nobel Prize winner from an unidentified Balkan country, two Taoist philosopher-historians, a Tibetan lama, a Hindu mystic in whose title the honorific *sri* was repeated one hundred and eight times, an eminent British archaeologist especially interested in dragons, and a rather puzzled science fiction writer imported from Southern California expressly for the purpose. As almost all the lecturers spoke either English, French, or German, only a few sessions had to be translated for his benefit. Occasionally, he would request works of reference which seemed irrelevant to everybody else, the *Book of Mormon,* the Eleventh Edition of the *Britannica,* the collected works of Alfred North Whitehead, of Herr Doktor Jung, and of Mary Baker Eddy, the *Bluejacket's Manual,* translations of the Mahayana and Hinayana Buddhist scriptures, and any number of others — and these he would scan rapidly. Occasionally, too, Mr. Pêng and Mr. Plantagenet would drop in on him, enquire as to his progress, and go away quite satisfied when he replied that eferything vas fine; he could feel it vorking inside der subconscience. He sent a picture postcard to Mama Schimmelhorn almost every day, views of Hongkong harbor and of museums and ecclesiastical edifices, to illustrate the cultural aspects of his visit, which he declared took up what little time remained after his arduous workday developing special cuckoo-clocks with ethnic overtones for Pêng-Plantagenets Southeast Asian trade. But from twilight on. he and Colonel Li and Little Anton devoted themselves to chasing pussycats. He and the Colonel became boon companions, and he was able to relax so completely that he never noticed such minor incidents as the occasional abrupt disappearance of some Slavic or Oriental or Middle Eastern type who apparently had been following them. At some of these, Little Anton simply crossed his eyes, gave them a push — and they were gone. No fuss, no muss. A few others were taken care of by friends of Colonel Li's, who employed less subtle, but no less effective, methods.

Papa Schimmelhorn's *yang* flourished, and his researches prospered. Among Hongkong's

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

profusion of pretty pussycats, he eventually almost forgot Miss Kittikool and Miss MacTavish, neglecting them shamefully except when, hours after midnight, he came home to renew his energies with a few hours of sleep. Then suddenly he announced that he had solved the problem, and that the applied technology, costing only a few hundred dollars, could be completed in no more than another week.

Mr. Pêng and Mr. Plantagenet were, of course, delighted. They announced that the completion of the task would be properly celebrated by a splendid banquet at the Pêng mansion. Little Anton and Colonel Li were pleased, partly because commendations and rewards would be coming to them, and partly because the strenuous pace he had been setting was getting wearing. Only Miss Kittikool and Miss MacTavish, their noses badly out of joint at his faithlessness, failed to rejoice.

Five days went by, and every day Papa Schimmelhorn worked hard, with the dismayed assistance of Pêng-Plantagenet's engineers and scientists, assembling a very strange contraption. All sorts of seemingly unrelated gadgets went into it: the private parts of an old Singer sewing machine, a curiously interlaced webbing of copper wire and nylon fishing line, a spiral neon tube fabricated to his orders and filled with a semi-liquid, semi-gaseous substance he himself had brewed in the Pêng-Plantagenet laboratories. The net result began to look like a Japanese temple gate, or *torii,* made partly out of metal, partly of iridescent plastics, and partly of ectoplasm; and when Mr. Plantagenet commented on its smallness, for it was four feet wide and scarcely large enough, as he pointed out, to accommodate even a little dragon, Papa Schimmelhorn slapped him jovially on the back and said, "Dickie, Your Machesty, don't vorry! Ve hook it up to der, anti-grafity machine und vith my *yang,* then — ho-ho-ho! — chust vatch it grow!"

Five days went by, and every night Papa Schimmelhorn went out on his *yang*-renewing mission, much to the disgust of Miss MacTavish and Miss Kittikool. Then, on the afternoon of the fifth day, the device was activated on a trial basis, but without being permitted to expand. Papa Schimmelhorn went up to it and peered through. He saw a different China and a different world. The fields were lush, the forests thick and green. Among the pure white clouds that adorned the sky, two handsome scarlet dragons were disporting themselves. And, on a boulder beside a waterfall, an ancient white-bearded gentleman

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

in silken robes sat quietly reading. Obviously, he was a sage.

"Chust look!" cried Papa Schimmelhorn.

Mr. Pêng and Mr. Plantagenet crowded in to look. They gasped in amazement and delight.

The sage looked up. He stood. Gravely he smiled upon them. Just as Papa Schimmelhorn flipped the switch turning the device off, he seemed to bow a welcome.

"Papa, you've *done* it!" Mr. Pêng cried out.

"Of course I do it," answered Papa Schimmelhorn. "Tomorrow I haff it open all der vay, und you can drife through vith maybe a horse und carriage."

Thoughtfully, Mr. Pêng observed that a horse-drawn carriage might be the very thing, just in case that other China had avoided mechanization, and Mr. Plantagenet remembered an elegant carriage and pair owned by a wealthy Dutch gentleman of his acquaintance, which he was sure he could borrow for a day or two. These arrangements were promptly made, and the balance of the afternoon was devoted to selecting appropriate gifts for whatever authorities might greet them: a Fabergé Easter Egg that had belonged to a Czarina, a nice copy of the Gutenberg Bible, carved emeralds from Ceylon, an original Titian, two Manets, a Gainsborough and a Turner, a tea service in platinum by the court jeweler to the late King Farouk, a one-minute repeater with two stop-second hands by Audemars-Piguet cased in the same metal, and a traditional cuckoo-clock featuring a whole choir of yodeling cuckoos, which Papa Schimmelhorn had thoughtfully brought with him in his carpetbag.

Regretfully, Mr. Pêng explained that his wife and Mrs. Plantagenet had, a day or two before, decided to take off on a shopping spree in London, Rome, Paris, and New York, in their own private jet. He and Mr. Plantagenet promised, however, that their absence would not be allowed to dampen the festivities that evening; and certainly it did not seem to, for everyone at the banquet was in excellent spirits and, as course followed rare Chinese course, many a toast was proposed to their success upon the morrow, to the triumphs that success was sure to bring, and to the genius who had made it possible.

The genius, who felt as though his *yang* had never been in finer fettle, divided his attention quite impartially between the dinner, the toasts, and the two extremely pretty pussycats who sat cuddled up against him. Colonel Li and Little Anton contributed to the general merriment by pressing innumerable drinks upon the sober

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

scientists and scholars who had served as Papa Schimmelhorn's consultants, until even they became positively uproarious. Even Miss Kittikool and Miss MacTavish, though seated somewhat apart from the center of attention, appeared to have regained their good humor, giggling and whispering to each other vivaciously. The unfortunate absence of Mrs. Pêng and Mrs. Plantagenet was soon forgotten, even by their husbands, and a glorious time was had by all.

In New Haven, on the day of Papa Schimmelhorn's disappearance, Mama Schimmelhorn had returned from the church social much later than she usually did. She was quite tiddly, Little Anton's vodka having worked its wonders, and in a mellow frame of mind, almost — but not quite — ready to forgive her husband. Humming *Down By Der Old Mill Shtream,* she unlocked the front door. "I'm home, Papa!" she called out.

She listened. Her only answer was a hoarse *"Mrrreow!"* from the basement. *Maybe Papa has gone to shleep?* she thought as she went down the stairs.

She unlocked the workshop door, and Gustav-Adolf, meowing loudly, rubbed against her legs to tell her he was starving. She turned the light on. Papa Schimmelhorn was nowhere to be seen. The Stanley Steamer too was gone. She frowned terribly. Her black dress rustling, she strode to the garage door. It was securely locked.

"Zo!" she cried out. *"Again* you run avay. To shleep vith naked vomen vhen you should be thinking how maybe you do nodt go to Heafen vhen you die! Dirty ol —"

Then she spied the note Little Anton had left pinned to the wall above the workbench. She pulled it down.

Dear, dear Great-aunt,
(she read)

I am so sorry that I missed you after coming all the way from Hongkong, especially as I am taking Papa back with me.

My employers want him to design some very special cuckoo-clocks. They'll pay handsomely and give him a huge bonus, and he'll be only a short time. He told me that when he gets back he's going to take you shopping for some new dresses and a new umbrella!

Affectionately,
Your Little Anton

And scrawled below this was the simple message, *I luff you, Mama!!* signed, *Papa xxxxxXXXX!*

She read the note twice. "Hmph!" she sniffed. "Zo dot's how der door opens und shtill iss locked. Lidtle Anton! Der new

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

umbrella I do-nodt beliefe. But maybe this time iss different. Lidtle Anton iss a goot boy now. Die Chinesers haff taught him all about Confucius und how to be nice to old people. Okay, I vait und see."

Her mind more at ease, she went upstairs again, fed Gustav-Adolf liver, and settled down to drink a cup of tea and phone Mrs. Hundhammer; and during the next couple of weeks, whenever her suspicions were reawakened they were lulled again by the arrival of a cultural postcard from her husband or from Little Anton. It was not until a few days after Papa Schimmelhorn announced his solution of the problem that her tranquillity was again shattered.

Her doorbell rang shortly after breakfast, and she opened up eagerly, looking forward to a pleasant theological disputation with her two usual Jehovah's Witnesses. Instead, on the front stoop stood a pair of the most elegant elderly ladies she had ever seen. Each was fairly tall; each was ramrod straight; each — despite her age — was still attractive. One was Chinese; the other, by the way she dressed and held herself, could only have been English. At the curb behind them stood a gleaming Imperial yellow Rolls-Royce with a chauffeur and liveried footman, and Hongkong license plates.

"I beg your pardon," said the Chinese lady, speaking very softly. "Are you Mrs. Schimmelhorn?"

Mama Schimmelhorn took in the situation at a glance. *"Ja,"* she said, "I am Mama. Vot hass he done now?" She stepped back so they could enter. "Come in und haff a seat, und right avay I bring der tea." Her black dress crackling, she bustled back and forth. "Alvays vhen he gets loose iss trouble vith naked vomen, sometimes vith only vun like Dora Grossapfel, sometimes vith four oder maybe fife. Only this vunce, vith Lidtle Anton who has been taught about Confucius —"

The elderly ladies exchanged glances.

" — this vunce I thought maybe he vill be goot. Vell, ve liff und learn —"

Reciting part of the long list of Papa Schimmelhorn's carnal sins, she served tea and biscuits, settled down with Gustav-Adolf on her lap, and permitted Mrs. Peng and Mrs. Plantagenet to introduce themselves and tell their tale.

Only a day or so before, they informed her, they had been visited by two young women in the employ of their husbands' firm, Miss Kittikool and Miss MacTavish, both of whom felt that — they were dreadfully sorry they had to tell her this — that they had been taken advantage of by Papa Schimmelhorn. So upset had they been that

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

they had revealed the nature of the project for which he had been hired — Mrs. Pêng did her best to explain the technicalities of Black Holes and anti-gravity and *yang* and *yin* — to engineer a breakthrough into another universe, where there were dragons and the Chinese Empire still flourished.

Mama Schimmelhorn stood up. *"Donnerwetter!* Die *yang* und *yin* I do nodt undershtand, also Black Holes except like maybe in Calcutta. But Papa — dot iss different. Vhen it iss nodt naked vomen, it iss time-trafel, und gnurrs, und sometimes X-rated cuckoo-clocks. Such monkey business. Vell, now I put a shtop!"

"We were hoping you could," Mrs. Plantagenet said fervently. "I assure you that I have no desire to become Queen of England. I couldn't possibly cope with that dreadful Labour Party at my age. Besides, Richard keeps talking about crusades against the Saracens, and though I dare say they deserve it, it does seem a bit late in the day for that sort of thing, doesn't it?"

"Primula's quite right," declared Mrs. Pêng. "I myself certainly do not want to be Empress of China, surrounded by eunuchs and slave girls and palace intrigues and all that rubbish. Of course, Horace has promised me that he doesn't want the throne, but there aren't any other candidates, and — well, you know how men are."

Mama Schimmelhorn indicated grimly that indeed she did.

"But worst of all," Mrs. Pêng continued, "he wants to bring the dragons back again, even though he knows I can't stand snakes and lizards and all those horrible crawly things. You see, in ancient China his family had charge of them, and they became quite devoted to the creatures. Can you imagine having the sky full of dragons, Mrs. Schimmelhorn?"

"Dragons?" Mama Schimmelhorn snorted. *"Herr Gott,* iss bad enough vith seagulls und die filthy shtarlings!"

"Exactly," said Mrs. Plantagenet, putting her tea-cup down. "We'd better phone and find out what sort of progress they've been making. I'll charge the call to my account."

"Der phone iss in der hall," said Mama Schimmelhorn.

Five minutes later, her guests returned with grave faces. "Your husband has already constructed his device and is about to give it a preliminary testing," Mrs. Pêng announced. "According to Miss Kittikool, however, he doesn't plan to make the breakthrough until late tomorrow afternoon. If we hurry, we may still have time. Will you come to Hongkong, Mrs. Schimmelhorn?"

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

Mama Shimmelhorn's expression would have done credit to a Grand Inquisitor. "Ja, I vill come!" she told them. "Ve finish up der tea, und I call Mrs. Hundhammer to come und feed mein Gustav-Adolf, und ve shtart right avay." She picked up her umbrella. "Papa," she proclaimed, hefting it, "*this* time vhen I catch you I make you vish I am chust a dragon inshtead of Mama Schimmelhorn!"

Fifteen minutes later, black hat firmly on her head, hands folded tightly over the umbrella's handle, she rode between her new-found friends in the back seat of the Imperial yellow Rolls, headed for the airport. She was in no way impressed by the luxury surrounding her. Her mind was fixed on one objective, and she smiled grimly as she contemplated it.

For security reasons, Papa Schimmelhorn had installed his interdimensional gate inside a huge godown owned by Peng-Plantagenet; and there, early next morning, he arrived with Little Anton and the two pretty Balinese to find Colonel Li already on duty at the doors and his employers awaiting him in the Dutch taipan's borrowed equipage beside the Stanley Steamer.

Once, as a youth in Switzerland, Papa Schimmelhorn had spent a pleasant summer driving a horse-drawn char-a-banc full of twittering female tourists from one romantic Alpine spot to another, and as the taipan's coachman had prudently been escorted home, he at once offered to take the reins. As soon as he had made sure that steam was up, he kissed the Balinese goodbye, showed Colonel Li the lever that dilated the gate, and he and Little Anton climbed to the box.

The gate expanded. The other China appeared there before them. The sleek, black, powerful horses pawed the ground and snorted. Papa Schimmelhorn shook out the reins and clucked them forward. "Zo!" he cried out. "Dragons, here ve come!"

They moved through the gate at a brisk trot, but now the landscape no longer showed the rock, the sage, the waterfall. A wide, smooth road took shape before them; it looked like porcelain, but on it the horses' hooves made virtually no sound. It did not, like most roads, simply wait for them, but changed form and direction much faster than it should, and the surrounding landscape altered with it. They were passed by crags and pines, by bamboo groves and orchards full of flowering trees — and suddenly they noticed that they were not alone. Behind them and to either side, vehicles escorted them, vehicles that called to mind at once

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

the majesty of a Bugatti Royale and the glowing purity of fine Sung Dynasty celadons. They had no wheels and floated silently a foot or so above the ground — and overhead, now, half a dozen discoid aircraft hovered just as silently. Bells sang their deep brazen song into the air —

"They appear to have achieved a considerable technology!" said Mr. Plantagenet apprehensively.

"I never expected anything like *this!*" whispered Mr. Pêng. "Dear me, I hope they're friendly!"

But Papa Schimmelhorn just took off his Tyrolean hat and smiled and waved at all of them.

Then suddenly the road took an abrupt turn and ended at a meadow between arcs of glorious flowers; and at its end a palace stood — a palace of unreflecting glass and porcelain, faceted in the most abstract and complex simplicities. An enormous yellow dragon was stretch out comfortably in front of it; and around him, and to either side, the meadow was thronged with dignitaries — gray-bearded sages, high mandarins in their embroidered robes, stately men and women who (Mr. Pêng observed *sotto voce*) could only have been tributary kings and nobles. Between them, near the dragon's head, stood an empty throne carved of a single block of jade, carved intricately in ancient times.

The horses spied the dragon. Eyes rolling, ears laid back, they balked; they plunged and reared; they paid no heed when their coachman tried to quiet them. Then suddenly the dragon looked at them out of his great golden eyes, and they stood still, tense and sweating, totally motionless. Several functionaries came forward, to take their bridles, to help Mr. Pêng and Mr. Plantagenet alight, to offer Papa Schimmelhorn a polite hand down, which was cheerfully ignored. Behind them, other officials stood, looking by no means as cordial and holding short metallic rods with control buttons on them.

"They've got lasers, Papa!" whispered Little Anton.

"Ja wohl!" answered Papa Schimmelhorn. "Chust like in *Shtar Vars.* But do nodt vorry. Somehow I vork it out."

The functionaries parted as obligingly as the Red Sea had for Moses, and through them strode a very tall Chinese, magnificently robed, who stood eye to eye with Papa Schimmelhorn. He addressed himself to Mr. Pêng, who simply couldn't take his eyes off the dragon.

"I, sir," he declared, in very strangely accented Mandarin, "am Prince Wen, the Prime Minister. I marvel at your insolence in coming here. Using this person's extraordinary talents and endowments

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

you have crossed forbidden frontiers. We have been observing you for centuries —" He gestured at the discoid aircraft. " — and we have even retained an understanding of your barbaric tongue. The dragons were indeed wise to have abandoned you. In your universe, *yang* and *yin* are perilously out of balance. Now you endanger ours. Had I not been ordered otherwise, I would at once have disposed of you and your illicit gate. Have you no idea of the dangers involved in tampering with Black Holes?" He shuddered. "But the Daughter of Heaven is too merciful. She has decreed that she must judge you personally."

He bowed three times toward the palace. Bells rang. Trumpets sounded.

"*D-daughter* of Heaven?" quavered Mr. Pêng.

"Of course," answered the Prime Minister. "In our universe *yang* and *yin* are in perfect balance. This is Thursday — therefore you will appear before the Empress. Had it been yesterday or tomorrow, the *Son* of Heaven would have examined you. Only on Sundays do they rule China and the world together."

"N-naturally," remarked Mr. Pêng.

The Prime Minister smiled cruelly. "I promise you that, once she sees how you have trespassed here, flaunting your unbalanced *yang* in our very faces, she will be quite as merciless as I."

Again the trumpets sounded. A crowd of courtiers and of ladies-in-waiting emerged from the palace's jade doors, moving in a pavane of abstract, highly ordered patterns. In their midst, robed in richly ornamented but curiously diaphanous brocades and wearing a spreading headdress of gold filigree adorned with pearls and jade, strode a Personage. Now in her late middle years, she had been and still was beautiful, but her eyes were cold and clear and calculating, and on her face was an expression of iron determination.

Papa Schimmelhorn, unable of course to understand the conversation, had been amusing himself by contemplating the ladies-in-waiting as they came out, rather lasciviously because some of them were very pretty pussycats indeed. Now, looking on the Empress, he gulped. That expression was only too familiar. He had first seen it on the face of Mama Schimmelhorn when he was courting her, and blinded by her girlhood pulchritude had failed to grasp its meaning. Mama's eyes were gray; the Empress' were black. Mama was a Swiss, originally a blonde; the Empress, quite as tall as she, Chinese. But that was unimportant. Papa Schimmelhorn knew instinctively

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

that they had much in common, and suddenly a panic premonition told him that he should run away. But there was, obviously, nowhere to run to.

Cymbals clashed. Wind instruments cried out like unseen sea birds. The Empress advanced through the pavane and mounted to her throne. Just once, she clapped her hands. There was instant silence. Then she addressed Prince Wen in a strange, singing, fluting language; and he replied at length in the same tongue, interspersing his comments with strong crystalline notes of emphasis whenever he gestured toward their visitors.

Finally he turned. "I have recommended your instant dissolution," he declared. "Painlessly, of course."

"That is unfair!" Mr. Pêng cried out. "At least you ought to let us present our gifts and our petitions!"

"It *is* unsporting!" put in Mr. Plantagenet.

The Empress silenced them. She spoke again in the alien tongue.

"I have been ordered to consult the great Chu-t'sai," Prince Wen announced, pointing at the dragon. "The Daughter of Heaven wishes him to decide your fate."

He and the Empress spoke again, addressing their remarks to Chu-t'sai himself. The dragon listened. With enormous dignity, he stood. He stretched his great neck over the courtiers' heads until his twenty-foot-long head was directly in front of Papa Schimmelhorn. For a long minute, while Little Anton trembled in his boots and even the Prime Minister held his breath, they regarded one another. Then Papa Schimmelhorn, with a chuckle, reached up and rubbed Chu-t'sai's mighty chin, and winked — and, never changing his expression, Chu-t'sai winked back.

"P-p-papa," stuttered Little Anton as the vast head drew back again. "Did you see what he *did?*"

"*Natürlich,*" replied Papa Schimmelhorn. "Ve undershtand each oder. He iss like Gustav-Adolf. I think maybe he iss a Dirty Old Man dragon."

Suddenly, then, Chu-t'sai himself spoke in the singing, fluting language, its words and notes pitched several octaves lower. He spoke only for a moment, but the Empress nodded.

"The great Chu-t'sai," translated Prince Wen with ill grace, "says that we must wait. It is fortunate for you that we, so much more advanced, learned to converse with dragons a thousand years ago. I shall find out how long the waiting is to be —"

But before he could put the question, Little Anton nudged

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

Papa Schimmelhorn. *"Listen!"* he whispered. "Do you hear what I hear?"

Papa Schimmelhorn listened. So did Mr. Pêng and Mr. Plantagenet. Unmistakably, on the road behind them, a powerful car was racing at full speed — and now everyone was staring past them in its direction.

Tires screamed on curves. The engine roared.

"Richard," said Mr. Pêng apprehensively. "That — that sounds to me like Mrs. Plantagenet's Ferrari."

"It does to me too!" moaned Mr. Plantagenet.

"Did you tell Colonel Li that they were on no account to be admitted?"

"Horace, I didn't. After all, they were in *Europe!* Why didn't you?"

"I — I never even thought of it," admitted Mr. Pêng.

There was a final screech of brakes. The throng parted. The bright red Ferrari slid to a harsh stop beside them. In it were three old ladies, all looking extremely angry. The door flew open, and the first out was Mama Schimmelhorn. She ignored everything and everybody. At her expression, even the great Chu-t'sai snorted dolefully. Her umbrella at the ready, she advanced against her husband.

"Hah!" she roared. "Again you get avay, to chase bad girls und play vith dragons und Black Holes und shpoil Little Anton so he forgets about Confucius!" She seized Papa Schimmelhorn firmly by the ear, and started applying the sharp point of her umbrella to his brisket by way of punctuation.

"Mama! Mama! *Bitte schön,* nodt in public, in front of efery-body! Only look — on der throne iss die Empress of China!"

"To her you should apologize!" Mama Schimmelhorn continued unrelentingly. "Coming to shteal her dragons und her dancing girls! Chust vait till ve get home —"

Meanwhile Mrs. Pêng and Mrs. Plantagenet had descended on their own husbands rather more genteely, but with equal resolution; and the Empress, gazing at the scene, turned to Prince Wen and said, in the singing tongue, "The great Chu-t'sai was right. Though they are of course still barbarians, their *yang* and *yin* may not be as hopelessly out of balance as you thought." She pointed at Mama Schimmelhorn. "At least, her *yin* certainly seems to be as effective as his *yang*. We'll keep them for a time at least, and find out their reason for coming here. Of course, we will make sure that their gate is closed and never built again. But who knows? Perhaps we may be able to help them become truly civilized."

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

So for three days Mr. and Mrs. Pêng, Mr. and Mrs. Plantagenet, Papa and Mama Schimmelhorn, and Little Anton were entertained imperially, with only the slight condescension inevitable in dealing with barbarians. Banquet followed banquet, feast followed feast, one magnificent spectacle followed closely on another: dances, dramas, and rituals almost unbelievable in their splendor dazzled the visitors, but most impressive of all was a ballet performed for them by the great Chu-t'sai and his wives high in the air during a thunderstorm. (Rather patronizingly — and to the annoyance of Mr. Pêng, who of course knew it already — Prince Wen pointed out that dragons, by virtue of their perfect *yang* and *yin*, had natural anti-gravity, and that that was why Chinese dragons were always depicted without wings.)

Mr. Pêng and Mr. Plantagenet were permitted to present their gifts, which were very graciously received, much being made of the Fabergé Easter Egg and especially of Papa Schimmelhorn's cuckoo-clock which the Emperor himself averred would thenceforth hang in the Imperial bedchamber. They were also allowed to introduce themselves formally to the entire court, after which — partly because of the family credentials Mr. Pêng and Mr. Plantagenet presented and partly becuse of the marked favor shown Papa Schimmelhorn by the great Chu-t'sai — their status improved noticeably, even Prince Wen mellowing a bit.

Mr. Pêng and Mr. Plantagenet were awed and delighted by all they saw. Mrs. Pêng, Mrs. Plantagenet, and Mama Schimmelhorn got along famously with the Empress via two or three interpreters, though Mrs. Pêng found it difficult to concentrate when she looked up and saw dragons watching her through the window. Little Anton, having been assigned a pair of pretty pussycats so that his *yang* would be in better balance, had a ball. Only Papa Schimmelhorn failed to enjoy himself; constantly surrounded by young women of surpassing beauty, he was never permitted out of range of the umbrella, and once or twice when he tried to sneak away, he was stopped effectively by enormous female attendants.

Not until the last day were Mr. Pêng and Mr. Plantagenet given permission to submit their petition to the Throne, and they did so with the utmost politeness and strictly according to protocol as defined by Prince Wen.

The audience was, of course, conducted on the meadow, so that Chu-t'sai could comfortably participate. He and the Imperial couple listened. Then they took counsel, speaking in hushed voices.

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

Finally, the Empress proclaimed their decision. She and the Emperor and the great Chu-t'sai all recognized the singular virtue of Mr. Pêng and Mr. Plantagenet, particularly in a world so gone to seed. They realized that Mr. Pêng was fully qualified to function as Heriditary Keeper of the Imperial Dragon Hatchery, if his world had only had one, and that Mr. Plantagenet would have made a marvellous King of England. She spoke of how impressed they were by Papa Schimmelhorn's genius and his tremendous *yang*, unparalleled since the days of the Yellow Emperor. However —

She paused and the great Chu-t'sai uttered a deep and mournful sound.

"However," she went on, "because the balance of *yang* and *yin* in your own world is so grievously impaired, and because it obviously will be very difficult to make the place habitable again, the great Chu-t'sai has regretfully denied permission to any of his relatives to return there with you."

Mr. Pêng's face fell. Mr. Plantagenet looked stricken.

'And as for your Black Hole and its illicit gate," she said, "much as we dislike dismantling so great and rare an accomplishment, for our own protection we must do so the instant you return —"

Mr. Pêng and Mr. Plantagenet started to protest, but she held up her hand.

" — and, as a condition of our letting you return, we must have your solemn promise that you, at least, will never try to reconstruct it. We are going to give you many gifts to take back with you, but after you have promised you shall receive, from the great Chu-t'sai, the most precious gift of all, which shall be your responsibility and the sacred responsibility of your sons and daughters. Do you promise solemnly?"

Mr. Pêng looked at Mr. Plantagenet. Mr. Plantagenet looked at Mr. Pêng. "We promise, Daughter of Heaven," Mr. Peng said sadly.

The Empress smiled. "Very well." She gestured, and four servitors came up carrying an enormous covered hamper, which they set down before Mr. Pêng.

"That is the great Chu-t'sai's gift to you," the Empress said. "It is lined with silk and with the softest down. It holds a clutch of eight dragon eggs, together with the latest scientific instructions on their proper care. A great honor has been paid you."

Mr. Pêng bowed profoundly and thanked the Empress, the Emperor, and the great Chu-t'sai for their trust in him and their munificence.

Then the Empress clapped her hands, and there was music. The

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

audience was at an end, and everyone turned to a late luncheon served there on the meadow, after which the rest of the Imperial presents were brought out, in boxes of ebony and lacquer, wrapped in silks of an unimaginable richness, and loaded into the carriage and into the Ferrari.

"We hate to see you go," the Empress said, "but I assure you it's for the best."

The most cordial farewells echoed from every side, and Papa Schimmelhorn embraced the great Chu-t'sai's right nostril. *"Herr Drache,"* he declared, "I vish I shpeak your langvidge."

The great Chu-t'sai whiffled at him softly.

"Ja!" said Papa Schimmelhorn. "I bet ve could tell each oder plenty of shtories —" He saw Mama's eye transfixing him, and patted the huge nostril once again with a sigh. *"Auf wiedersehen!"* he called back over his shoulder.

The carriage started down the road; the Ferrari followed; the escort fell in to either side and overhead. The road and landscape unrolled before them, faster, faster —

Then, as abruptly as they had left it, they were back inside the godown, with only a very tired and worried Colonel Li waiting to welcome them. As the Ferrari's rear bumper cleared the gate, behind them they heard a soft implosion, and for an instant the air seemed to scintillate and crackle. They turned — and the gate was gone. Only the Stanley Steamer stood there, a thread of smoke and the smell of burning insulation issuing from its hood.

There was a long, long silence, which Mr. Plantagenet finally broke with a *harrumph.*

Mr. Pêng turned to him dolefully.

"Cheer up, old lad." said Mr. Plantagenet. "We *do* have the dragon's eggs, you know. When they hatch out we'll have proper dragons!"

"Richard," answered Mr. Pêng, "do you know how long dragon's eggs take to hatch? *One thousand years* — and even though our Chinese thousand is often an indeterminate number, it's still going to be a dismally long time."

The Pêngs and the Plantagenets very kindly invited the Schimmelhorns to spend a few more days in Hongkong as their guests, but Mama Schimmelhorn refused, saying she was ashamed to be seen with Papa in polite society. She insisted they drive directly to the airport; and this they did, delaying only long enough for Little Anton to retrieve Papa Schimmelhorn's carpetbag and stow it in the Stanley's trunk, for Mama to

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

accept a substantial check (made out in her name) from Mrs. Plantagenet, and for their presents from the Empress to be put aboard.

During the drive, not a word was said, even Little Anton remained silent, and the only sound was the occasional sharp tapping of the umbrella's point against the back of the driver's seat. The Imperial yellow jet was awaiting them with its ramp down, but this time Papa Schimmelhorn knew he could not fly it in. His drive up the ramp was positively funereal.

Despite the courteous and considerate crew, the splendid service and superb cuisine, their return was by no means a fun flight — and the fact that Colonel Li, in a mistaken effort to do his friend a final favor, had assigned the two pretty Balinese as hostesses did nothing to improve the atmosphere or alleviate Papa Schimmelhorn's despondency. All the way, Mama Schimmelhorn sat grimly in her seat, never breaking silence except to elaborate on the misdeeds of Dirty Old Men, and how promising youths like Little Anton would do well to pay them no attention and think rather of Confucius.

They landed at New Haven. Mama Schimmelhorn tipped each of the crew fifty cents. The ramp extruded. They climbed into the car.

A tear in his eye, Papa Schimmelhorn cast one last lingering look at the pair of Balinese, and mutely shook Little Anton by the hand. Luckily, he had presence of mind enough quickly to palm and pocket the small piece of paper his grand-nephew passed to him.

"Ve drife shtraight home," ordered Mama Schimmelhorn, and he obeyed.

"Ve put der car in der garage," she told him, unlocking the door, waiting until he had driven in, then locking it again and pocketing the key.

"Und now ve go upshtairs und open up die presents from die Empress."

Papa Schimmelhorn picked them up and followed her. There were two long boxes in cases of figured silk, fastened with silken cords. There was a large square box similarly wrapped. Mama Schimmelhorn opened the long ones first. Lacquered, each contained a scroll on silk, with carved ivory ends. She unrolled the first. It was a classical Chinese ancestral portrait of Papa Schimmelhorn seated in a great teak chair and garbed in the handsome robes of a jade-button mandarin and Assistant (Honorary) Keeper of the Imperial Dragon Hatchery.

"Ach!" she exclaimed. "Dot iss how you should look — nodt alvays leering und vinking und thinking about naked vomen."

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

She unrolled the second. A counterpart of the first, it showed her in the role of the high mandarin's wife, appropriately attired, except that her black hat was set firmly on her head and that her right hand, relentlessly, held her umbrella. On her lap, the painter had depicted Gustav-Adolf, whom Mrs. Pêng and Mrs. Plantagenet had described carefully to the Empress.

"It iss beaudtiful!" murmured Mama Schimmelhorn. "Ve hang vun each side of der fireplace."

Then she opened the third package, and out of a box of ebony took a large bronze *ting*, an ancient sacrificial vessel of great rarity and value.

"Vot iss?" grumbled Papa Schimmelhorn. "To cook die beans?"

"Shtupid!" she snapped. "It iss to plant maybe petunias. Now go downshtairs und get your bag, und bring up poor Gustav-Adolf."

Papa Schimmelhorn departed gladly, and as soon as he determined that he and Gustav-Adolf were indeed alone, he read the message Little Anton had passed to him. It said,

Dear Papa,

There's another present, just for you. It's from the Emperor and your dragon chum. I sneaked it out in my own little universe so that Prince Wen wouldn't catch on.

It's out of one of those air-cars of theirs, and I've translated what it says on the outside.

Have fun, old boy!

Love,

Anton

Papa Schimmelhorn hurried to the trunk. Behind his carpetbag, there was a plain cardboard carton with Chinese characters, and under these was the translation:

Imperial Air-Car Factory
(it read)
Anti-Gravity Unit
To Be Installed In
Steam-Propelled Vehicles Only
(3 Dragonpower)
Warranted Black-Hole-Free

Quickly he put it back again and closed the trunk. He hoisted the carpetbag to one huge shoulder and Gustav-Adolf, who had been sniffing at the Stanley Steamer, to the other. As he went up to rejoin Mama Schimmelhorn, he did his very best to look downcast and shame-stricken. But he didn't make a very good job of it.

He was thinking of fluffy white clouds at two thousand feet, of warm summer breezes, and of Dora Grossapfel's stretchpants.

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

Fantasy and Science Fiction

MARKET PLACE

BOOKS-MAGAZINES

SCIENTIFANTASY specialist: Books, magazines. Free catalog. Gerry de la Ree, 7 Cedarwood, Saddle River, N.J. 07458.

SPECIALISTS: Science Fiction, Fantasy, Weird Fiction, Books, Pocketbooks. Lists issued. Stephen's Book Service, Post Office Box 321, Kings Park, L.I., New York 11754.

SF-FANTASY magazines, books, paperbacks. Lists free. Collections also purchased. Robert Madle, 4406 Bester Drive, Rockville, MD. 20853.

FREE CATALOG! Science Fiction and mystery books. Save to 70%. Spencer Books, P.O. Box 186, So. Laguna, CA. 92677.

PAPERBACKS out of print. Send wants. SASE, McCrae, 8120 Büttonwood, Citrus Heights, CA. 95610.

HIGHEST PRICES PAID FOR: Arkham House, Fantasy Press, Gnome Press, All First Edition Hardcovers. Weird Tales, Unknown, Astounding, All other Pulp Magazines. Midnight Book Company, 1547 East 21 Street, Brooklyn, NY 11210.

FREE CATALOG of hardcover science fiction, fantasy books and pulps. Canford, Box 216, Freeville, NY 13068.

New, Used, and Out of Print Books for Sale. 15% Discount. Allan Sherman, 49 Fieldstone Road, Staten Island, NY 10314.

Search service. Free FSF catalogue. Aardvarks FSF Books, Box 15070, Orlando, Fla. 32858. Also mystery-detective lists upon request.

SF-FANTASY BOOKS for sale. Free lists. Gordon Barber, 35F Minneapolis Ave., Duluth, MN. 55803.

SF-FANTASY PB ORIGINALS. 700+ items. Catalog $1.00. Merlin's, 915 Emb. Del Norte, Goleta, CA 93017.

FOREIGN EDITIONS OF FANTASY AND SCIENCE FICTION. COPIES of French, Portuguese, Spanish and Swedish editions available at $1.00 each, three for $2.00. Mercury Press, Box 56, Cornwall, Conn. 06753.

SCI-FI GRAB BAG. 20 *different* flats (Galaxy, Analog, etc.) - send $6.00. Plus - free, 50 page S.F. catalogue (cat. alone-send 75¢). Passaic Book Center, 594 Main Ave., Passaic, NJ 07055, Dept. FY.

FREE LISTS. Used paperbacks, hardbacks. Science fiction, mysteries. All good condition. 15¢ up. L & J, Box 693, Bellevue, Nebraska 68005.

SF, FANTASY, ERB. Lists. R.J. Czerwien, 7289 W. 173rd Pl., Tinley Park, IL. 60477.

BOOK READERS AND COLLECTORS! Send wants to: S&S Books, 80 North Wilder, FS-33, St. Paul, MN 55104.

HUGO WINNING ALGOL features LeGuin, Marion Zimmer Bradley in the Winter issue. $1.95, year $4.50. ALGOL, Box 4175F, New York, NY 10017.

F&SF 1949-73 complete, beautiful. $200.00. Mittelmann, 90 Riverside Drive, NYC 10024.

THRUST-SF IN REVIEW #9 features Norman Spinrad, Ted White, Star Wars Debate, $1.50, PO Box 746, Adelphi, MD 20783.

Doc Savage Pulps: Will page $2500. for complete set. Box 212, Central Islip, NY.

RARE, USED AND NEW fantasy and science fiction. Sample catalogues free. Over 10,000 hardcover books in stock. L. W. Currey Rare Books Incorporated, Elizabethtown, NY 12932.

Astoundings, Unknowns, magazines, books. Marx, 4412 18th, Lubbock, Texas 79416.

CLOTHING

F&SF T-SHIRTS. 100% cotton, navy blue with original magazine logo imprinted in white. Sm, med, large, extra-large. $4.50 each, Mercury Press, Box 56, Cornwall, Ct. 06753.

PERSONAL

DATES GALORE! Meet singles-anywhere. Call DATELINE, toll-free (800) 451-3245.

Do you have something to advertise to sf readers? Books, magazines, typewriters, telescopes, computers, space-drives, or misc. Use the F&SF Market Place at these low, low rates: $5.00 for minimum of ten (10) words, plus 50 cents for each additional word. Send copy and remittance to: Adv. Dept., Fantasy and Science Fiction, P.O. Box 56, Cornwall, Conn. 06753.

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

Games for Thinkers

from WFF 'N PROOF publishers

THE EMPHASIS IS NOT ON WHAT TO THINK, BUT HOW TO THINK!

ON-SETS

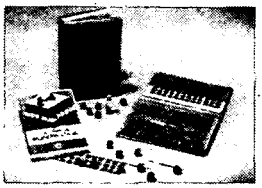
2 to 4 players

$10.00*

The Game of Set Theory. By Layman E. Allen, Peter Kugel, (M.I.T.), Martin Owens (Mitre Corp.) The game of set theory. This 30-game package can instruct students in kindergarten through high school in basics of set theory as well as extend a challenge to any adult exploring "new math." Encourages players to enjoy mathematics while learning concepts of union, intersection, logical differences, complement, identity, inclusion, null and universal sets.

CONFIGURATIONS: Number Puzzles and Patterns for All Ages. by Harold L. Dorwart (Professor of Mathematics, Trinity College). A series of ingenious geometric and mathematical problems that will delight and challenge those who enjoy careful reasoning. Suitable for Jr. and Sr. high school levels. If you prefer solitaire, this one is for you.

1 Player $6.75*



WFF 'N PROOF

2 to 4 players

$13.00*

The Game of Modern Logic. By Layman E. Allen, (Professor of Law and Research Social Scientist, University of Michigan). The original game of symbolic logic. Twenty-one-game kit that starts with speed games that challenge intelligent adults. The kit provides entertainment and practice in abstract thinking relevant for philosophy, mathematics, English, and computer programming for Jr. and Sr. high school.

QUERIES 'N THEORIES

For teen-agers and adults

2 to 4 players

$13.00*

The Game of Science & Language. (A Simulation of Scientific Method and Generative Grammars). By Layman E. Allen and Joan Ross (University of Michigan) and Peter Kugel (Massachusetts Institute of Technology). Through inductive reasoning, players learn scientific method of inquiry and gain skill in organizing, analyzing, and synthesizing data while engaged in an intriguing game of linguistics.

THE PROPAGANDA GAME

2 to 4 players

$11.00*

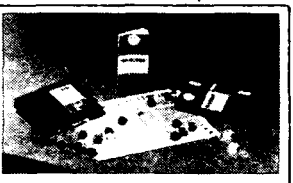
By Lorne Greene (N.B.C., Paramount Studios), and Robert Allen (Director of Academic Games, Nova University). Students learn the fascinating techniques used by professionals to influence public opinion by learning to recognize "bandwagon" appeals, faulty analogy, out-of-context quotes, rationalization, technical jargon, emotional appeals, and many more. Particularly fascinating for social studies classes, English, problems of democracy, debate.

EQUATIONS

2 to 4 players

$10.00*

The Game of Creative Mathematics. By Layman E. Allen. Our most popular game of mathematics. Five-game kit for use in intermediate grades through high school. Includes arithmetic operations such as addition, subtraction, multiplication, division, exponents and radicals in a variety of number bases. Like chess, the game can be as simple or as complex as the players make it.



ON-WORDS: The Game of Word Structures, by Professors Layman E. Allen and Frederick L. Goodman and Doris Humphrey and Joan Ross, Research Associates (University of Michigan). An instructional game that incorporates any aspect of words that players wish to introduce. Players practice and learn spelling, counting, grammar, phonetics, word roots, inflectional endings, prefixes and suffixes.

2 or more players / For children & adults $10.00*

WFF 'N PROOF GAMES

1460-MH South Blvd., Ann Arbor, MI. 48104

____	a. WFF 'N PROOF (logic)	$13.00*
____	b. QUERIES 'N THEORIES (sci. & lang.)	13.00*
____	c. EQUATIONS (mathematics)	10.00*
____	d. ON-SETS (set theory)	10.00*
____	e. PROPAGANDA (social studies)	11.00*
____	f. CONFIGURATIONS (geometry)	6.75*
____	g. ON-WORDS (word structures)	10.00*
____	5-game special (a-e)	49.95*
____	6-game special (a-f)	55.95*
____	7-game special (a-g)	64.95*

*includes postage & handling

My check is enclosed for $_____

Name _____

Address _____

City_____ State_____ Zip_____

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

PREPARE FOR WINTER! WITH AUTO "NEW-LIFE" KIT

For

Cars! Motor Cycles! Trucks! Buses!, Vans!

- ★ Saves On Fuel
- ★ Less Oil Burning
- ★ Improves Power And Compression
- ★ Add 50,000 Additional Miles Of Improved Performance
- ★ Extends Life Of Battery
- ★ Ensures Satisfactory Performance Of Battery In Freezing Weather

NO EQUIPMENT TO BUY
NO WORK TO DO

- ★ Drop Motaloy Pellets In Gas Tank
- ★ Pour VX-6 Fluid In Battery

Consumers Co-Operative Service
Consumers Building
220 South State Street, Chicago, Ill. 60604

Please rush me the following on your 30 day Money-back Guarantee

☐ 1 Auto New-Life Kit for $9.99
☐ 2 Auto New-Life Kits for $19.00
ENCLOSE 75¢ for handling and postage.

I enclose ☐ check ☐ money order for $ _____

Name (print) _____

Address _____

City _____ State _____ Zip _____

MISCELLANEOUS

ESP LABORATORY. This new research service group can help you. For FREE information write: Al G. Manning, ESP Laboratory, 7559 Santa Monica Blvd., Los Angeles, Calif. 90046.

JAPANESE Girls Make Wonderful Wives. We have large number of listings. Many interested in marriage. Only $1.00 brings application, photos, names, description, etc. Japan International, Box 156-FSF, Carnelian Bay, CA 95711.

BEAUTIFUL Mexican - Oriental girls needing American Boy-Friends. Free Details, "actual" photos. World, Box 3876-FAN, San Diego, CA 92103.

AWAKEN THE SLEEPING giant within you with this new complete home study hypnosis course. Free Details: Jefco, Rt. 12, Box 330G6, Indianapolis, Ind. 46236.

We Are RESOLVED: Space Travel is POSSIBLE NOW for Private Enterprise! Send comments and suggestions. Enclose 25¢ if reply desired. SPACE NOW, Information Services-F, Box 1019, Rapid City, SD 57701.

BIGFOOT TAPE. Sasquatch legend, sightings, discussion plus eerie screams of large unidentified creature captured on tape, Northern California wilderness. Cassette $3. Searchteam, Box 485, Redway, Calif. 95560.

FINANCE YOUR PROJECTS with government/-foundation grants. Charters (Independent Chapters), Ministers, Doctorates, other Advanced Degrees/Titles available. Omnidenominational. Free details. The Aquarian Church, 432-F PCH, Hermosa Beach, California 90254.

FREE BROCHURE. Cryonics Association, 24041 Stamford, Oak Park, Mich. 48237.

PLAY F&SF games by mail. SASE. Thomas B. Webster, 379 103rd Ave., Plainwell, MI. 49080.

SWEDISH GIRLS! Details, photos $1., Sweden International, Box 7425-FS, Chicago 60680, USA.

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

TWO BIG BOOKS FROM MASTER STORYTELLERS!

Dell SF

GORDON R. DICKSON'S SF BEST $1.95

Nine classic tales guaranteed to entertain. Introduction by Spider Robinson. Illustrations by Rick Bryant.

THE OPHIUCHI HOTLINE by John Varley $1.50

The spectacular first novel by science fiction's most brilliant new writer! "Highly satisfying."—The New York Times

"Isn't just a good read, it's a *great* read."—Damon Knight

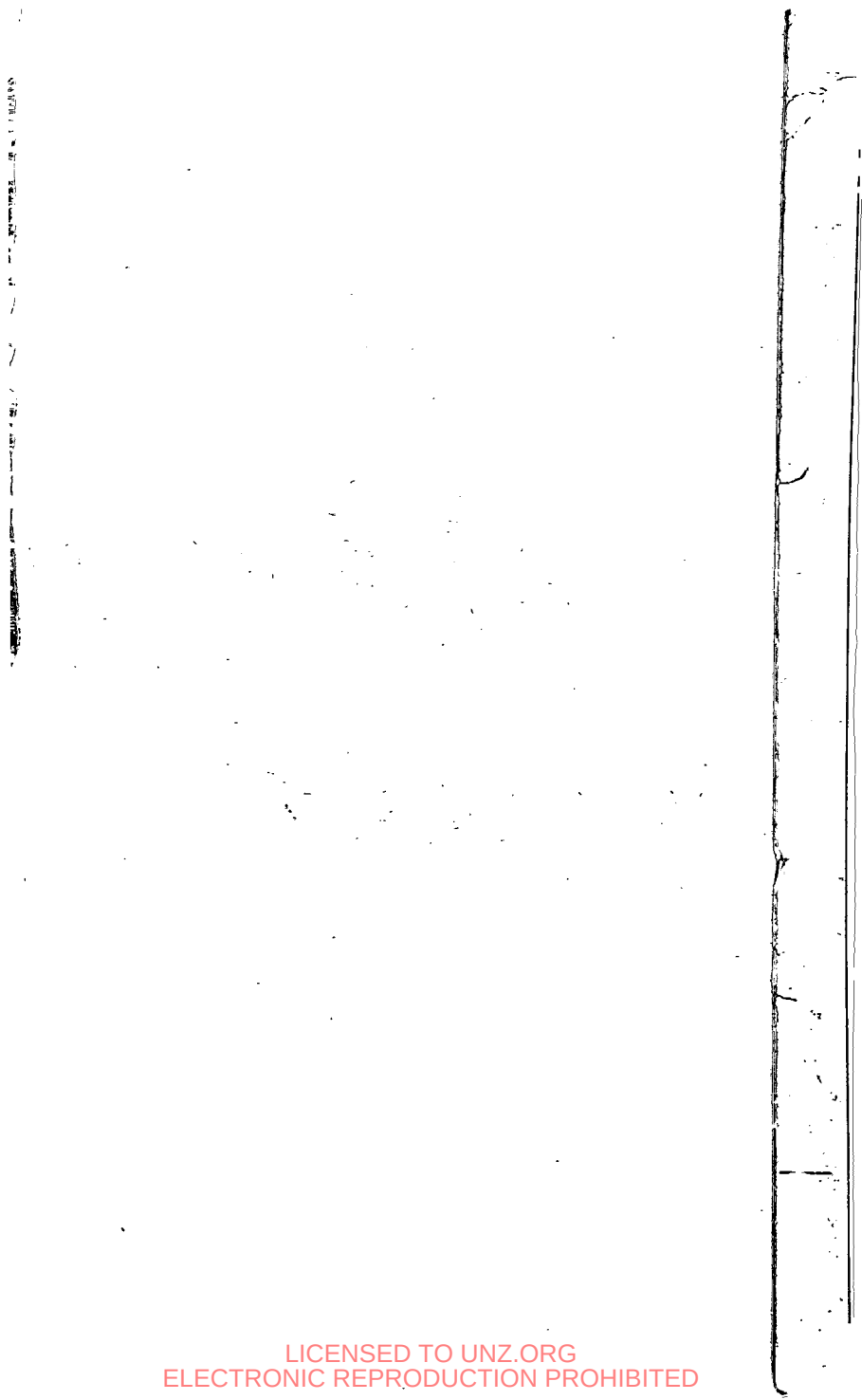
"Breathtakingly original and just damned *good*."—Harlan Ellison

Recently published—
SUNSTOP 8 by Lou Fisher
A space adventure of gambling and derring-do, starring Chet McCoy, Intergalactic Bookie Extraordinaire

Dell

Dell Publishing Co., Inc.
1 Dag Hammarskjold Plaza
245 East 47th Street
New York, N.Y. 10017

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED


LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED